University of Alberta

PLATO'S THEORY OF FORMS

by

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I argue that

1) passages from Plato's dialogues clearly indicate that Forms are the essences of sensible objects; and,
2) a number of problems associated with the Theory of Forms are solved if sensible objects are considered to be the sensible appearances (in space and time) of Forms.

This thesis presents a "theoretical exposition" of Plato's Theory of Forms, beginning with an outline of the Theory of Forms and then presenting a more detailed exposition of various problems associated with the theory, in particular the question of the immanence and/or transcendence of Forms, and the problem of the Third Man Argument. In presenting a possible solution to the question of Formal immanence and/or transcendence, the thesis also offers an explanation as to how Plato might have circumvented the Third Man Argument.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 1

CHAPTER 2 7

CHAPTER 3 45

CHAPTER 4 65

LITERATURE CITED 68

CHAPTER 1

It has been argued that the vagueness of Plato's discussion of participation, the criticisms levelled at the Theory of Forms by the *Parmenides*, and the problematic nature of various aspects of the theory all suggest that either Plato was still trying to iron out the details of his ontology as he wrote his dialogues, or that he simply became confused by the complexity of his own theories. And indeed, if one fails to give Plato's dialogues a close, careful reading, one is forced to conclude that Plato's ontology has some very, very large holes in its structure, if not downright inconsistencies. Yet the purpose of any piece of philosophical writing should be to make its reader think, and it is up to the reader to take the author's words one step further and envision what possibilities are entailed by them. It is a given fact that certain problems regarding the Theory of Forms are evident in Plato's dialogues. The question remains as to whether or not a careful examination and analysis of Plato's works will reveal possible solutions to these problems.

The purpose of this thesis is to do exactly this: to attempt to resolve certain problems associated with Plato's Theory of Forms, based upon evidence found in Plato's dialogues; in other words, my goal is to demonstrate that the Theory of Forms provides solutions to some of its own apparent problems.

I realize that one criticism that might be levelled at this thesis is that it does not take into account the interpretations and criticisms of Plato's metaphysics given by Aristotelian, Neoplatonic, or other ancient sources; however, the purpose of this thesis is

not to assess the reliability of ancient commentators' accounts of Plato's philosophy, nor is it an attempt to reconstruct what might have been the so-called "Secret Doctrines" circulating in the Academy. Of course, I will be using the ideas of contemporary scholars in order to identify, explain, and answer criticisms that have been targeted at Plato's ontology, and to help develop my own thesis about the subject. However, just as I am not examining ancient interpretations of Plato's writings, I will not be taking into account contemporary psychological, mythological, political or otherwise "alternative" interpretations of Plato's writings and the ontology contained within them.

In addition, some readers may choose to attack this thesis on the grounds that it does not pay strict attention to the "three periods" method of dating and classifying Plato's dialogues and the philosophical theories presented in them. I have deliberately chosen not to show too much concern for separating the middle dialogues from the early and late ones for several reasons. First of all, how exactly the Platonic dialogues should be chronologically organized is not known for certain. Analyzing apparent changes in writing style and philosophical subject matter and its presentation is all very well; however, no one really knows how Plato went about writing his dialogues. It is possible that Plato kept rough drafts of dialogues in stashed away in his desk or at the back of his mind for years before actually writing them down on paper, and no one knows for certain how many revisions the dialogues were put through before they were made public. Furthermore, the reason why each dialogue was written, and who its specific readership was to be, is not known with any certainty either. Consequently, it is possible that some of the late dialogues existed in idea form before any of the early dialogues did, and that

there are perfectly good reasons as to why the Forms are discussed somewhat differently in each of the three periods, and even in different dialogues of the same period.

I realize that the fact that I have chosen to deal with Plato's works in translation perhaps does make my primary sources less reliable in terms of their faithfulness to Plato's own ideas. Yet, despite the problems presented by the development (or decay) of language, the pitfalls of translation, and the possible misunderstandings that are necessarily a (potential) part of the process of communication, I believe that as long as one tries to preserve the original meaning of the text and seriously tries to understand the thinker's point of view, it is possible to come to an accurate understanding of the work of an ancient philosopher.

My thesis begins in the next section of this introductory chapter, where I shall present a brief summary of Plato's Theory of Forms. Following this summary of the theory, in Chapter Two I shall discuss two problems associated with the Theory of Forms: the strange relationship (commonly known as participation) that exists between Forms and sensible objects, and the question of whether Forms are immanent or transcendent. In addition, I shall present an analysis of various aspects of Formal paradigmatism in Chapter Two. In Chapter Three I shall present my own views on how a number of difficult concepts associated with the Theory of Forms may be explained. Finally, I shall present a brief summary of the conclusions I draw in this thesis in Chapter Four.

According to Plato's Theory of Forms, the Forms are eternal, unchanging, whole, pure, uniform, and perfect entities existing in a realm that is separate from the world of sensible things. Whereas the Forms are indivisible, whole, non-material entities, sensible objects possess a composite, physical being. As they are composed of matter that is

capable of being divided and split apart, sensible objects[1] are subject to alteration and decay. By contrast, the Forms are indestructible due to the fact that they are indivisible immaterial objects lacking parts that may be separated from the whole (*Phaedo*, 78b-80b).

The existence and nature of the incorporeal Forms can be determined only by means of rational contemplation; sense-perception can provide one with no direct knowledge of the Forms; rather, all sense-perceptions must be exposed to rational scrutiny (*Phaedo*, 65d-66a), which may in turn lead to "recollection" of the Forms, as is described in the *Phaedo* (72e-75e) and *Meno* (81c-85d). According to the *Phaedo*, "learning is no other than recollection" (72e, Grube translation 1997, 63; also *Meno* 81e) of the knowledge of certain "realities" (cf. 76d-e, Grube translation 1997, 67). These so-called "realities" are the Forms (75c-d, 76d-e). Knowledge of the Forms is gained by the soul prior to its being born into a body (75b-76e, also *Meno* 86a, and suggested by *Timaeus* 41e-42a). This knowledge of the Forms is lost at birth but then is recollected through the sense-perceptions of the everyday experiences of the living, awake individual (75e). However, sense-perceptions do not provide one with direct knowledge of the Forms; rather, all sense-perceptions must be subject to rational scrutiny in order for the Forms to be recollected. The objects of sense-perceptions are like the Forms but are deficient or inferior to the Forms with respect to their being and/or reality (74d-e). Nevertheless, the Forms, though different from sensible objects in terms of the "trueness" of their being and/or reality, are like them (cf. 76a).

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[1]Throughout this thesis, by "sensible object," I mean any bearer of sensible qualties, regardless of whether it happens to be a countable (for example, a dog or a table), mass entity (water or gold, for example), or sensible characteristic (such as the redness of a tomato, for instance). I consider sensible characteristics of objects to be sensible objects themselves, as it is possible for to speak of, for example, the dullness of the tomato's redness, or for that matter, its vibrancy, garishness, or ripeness.

Being similar to the Forms, sensible objects will remind one of them, but the recognition of similarity is not just a matter of perceiving identity-relations; instead, the recognition of similarity also requires judgement of whether or not "the similarity to that which one recollects is deficient in any respect or complete" (74a, Grube translation 1997, 64). The recognition of similarity, then, also involves the recognition of difference. Knowing how it is that things are similar or different involves a process of comparison and judgement (cf. 76d). Comparative judgement is a sort of weighing process, where the degree of likeness or difference existing between two objects is measured (cf. *Protagoras*, 356a-357a). The process of comparative judgement is the same process as that involved in calculation (see *Republic* VII 524d-526b and *Theaetetus* 186a-c); therefore, for Plato, reason amounts to a process of comparative judgement (*Philebus* 21a-c). And, the process of comparative judgement that consitutes the Platonic conception of reasoning is the same process that is involved in the recollection of the Forms. To recollect Forms, then, is to subject sense-perceptions to rational scrutiny in order to determine how it is that they are like to or different from true reality (or, for that matter, each other).

As the human power of perception is imprecise and frequently inaccurate, to trust that sense-perceptions can give one knowledge of reality is a mistake. Although the perceptions of the body aid one in recollection of the Forms, the inaccuracy of perception is an obstacle to the knowledge of "true reality." Therefore, knowledge of "true reality" -- the Forms themselves -- can only be had through the powers of reason within the soul or mind (*Phaedo*, 65b-c). However, as the rational powers of the soul are always interrupted by the body's desires for nurturance and pleasure, and the body's susceptibility to pain and disease, complete, pure knowledge of the Forms can be had only when the soul is

separated from the body, as in death (or before birth), when the soul is free to contemplate the Forms untroubled by the body (*Phaedo*, 66b-67b).

That the Forms are eternal is simply taken for granted by the participants in the discussion in the *Phaedo* (see 76e-77a). A substantial portion of the dialogue, however, is devoted to proving the immortality and indestructibility of the soul. Due to similarities that are claimed by Socrates (in the dialogue) to exist between the soul and the Forms, these proofs therefore explain characteristics not only of the soul, but also of the Forms. That which is immortal, eternal, and indestructible must be, according to the dialogue, incomposite and not capable of being divided into parts in any way. Furthermore, that which is eternal must also forever remain in the same state and not be subject to change, as that which is subject to change is composite. What is true and real must be purely and invariably that which it is; therefore, individual Forms cannot have a composite structure, but must be the same all throughout. And, as the Forms are incomposite and uniform, they are not subject to change, and as they are not subject to change, they are therefore eternal. Sensible objects that are subject to change and destruction are not eternal. Whereas the body can be perceived and is subject to change and decay, and therefore belongs the realm of the sensible, the existence of the soul cannot be perceived with the senses and is instead inferred by means of reason. The existence of that which is real, incomposite, eternal, and unchanging is known through the soul, while the existence of that which is composite, perishable, and variable is perceived by the body. As it is only the soul that can know the Forms, and as the soul is like the Forms, in that its existence is known by reason alone, it must be that the soul is immortal and eternal like the Forms (*Phaedo*, 78c-80b).

CHAPTER 2

The key concept underlying the Theory of Forms is the claim that Forms are responsible for making sensible objects the specific types of things that they are. In other words, the most important idea contained within the Theory of Forms is the notion that a very special relationship exists between Forms and material objects; yet a major problem in Platonic philosophy is the question of how it is that matter and the Forms interrelate. At various times, Plato characterizes sensible matter as "partaking of," "sharing in," "participating in,"[2] "imitating,"[3] and "resembling"[4] the Forms (Prior 1985, 37-38). Fujisawa (1974, 40) sorts terminology referring to the Form-sensible object relation into three groups: expressions dealing with taking something into oneself, or having something come to be present within a thing; expressions dealing with taking part in something; and expressions related to resemblance. Verbs of the first group (the "taking in" expressions) appear primarily in the so-called early and middle-period dialogues, while verbs of the second group (the "partaking" expressions) appear primarily in the middle-period dialogues, and the resemblance expressions of the third group appear prominently in the middle dialogues, but are also present in the late dialogues, and occasionally appear in the early-period dialogues (Fujisawa 1974, 42). Fujisawa (1974, 40) suggests that his

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[2]The various idioms translated as "partaking of," "taking part in," "sharing," "having a share in," and "participating in" include *metechein*, *methexis*, *metalambanein*, and *metaschesis* (see Fujisawa 1974, 40).

[3]*Mimeomai*.

[4]*Eoikenai* and related expressions.

charting of the usage of various sorts of Form-sensible object relation terms reflects the development of Plato's thought over the years that he was writing; however, what I think is more important to note about Fujisawa's examination of Form-sensible object relation terminology is the fact that in the so-called middle dialogues where the Theory of Forms is said to first appear and be thoroughly discussed, all three of Fujisawa's terminology groups appear. In other words, in those dialogues where Plato is most concerned about discussing the Forms themselves -- what they are, what they are like, how they "work," what they do -- he uses terminology from all three of Fujisawa's identified groups in order to talk about the relationship between Forms and sensible objects. So, then, when examining the Theory of Forms in the light of the problem of participation or the Form-matter relationship, I believe that it is unnecessary to be overly concerned with the chronological order of dialogues. Instead, I think that study of the Theory of Forms and participation should focus upon the content of Plato's dialogues, and be concentrated upon those dialogues whose apparent purpose is to explain what a Form is and what it does in relation to matter. And, moreover, I think the fact that the Form sensible-object relation terminology that appears in the middle dialogues also appears to some extent in the early and late dialogues suggests that Plato probably thought of the Forms in more or less the same way from the beginning to the end of his writing career, although it is likely that over the course of his lifetime, which details of the Theory of Forms were to serve as the focus of Plato's writing changed. Consequently, as I have mentioned earlier, although most of my thesis will focus on the discussion of Forms in Plato's so-called middle dialogues, I may refer to early- and late-period dialogues as well, where applicable, as I

believe that Plato maintained his Theory of Forms throughout the time that he was writing philosophy.

Fujisawa's grouping of philosophical terms suggests one theory about the development of Plato's thought: that in the early dialogues, Plato thought of the Forms as being immanent in sensible objects (hence the "taking in" Form-matter relation terminology), while in the later dialogues Plato posited the Forms as transcendent, existing in a realm separate from sensible objects (hence the "participation" and resemblance terminology).[5] The problem with suggesting that Plato thought of Forms in the early dialogues differently from how he thought of Forms in the later dialogues is that according to the Form-matter relationship terminology used in the middle dialogues, Forms must be *both* immanent *and* transcendent. As Fujisawa (1974, 31-32) mentions, in order to circumvent this strange position, some scholars hold that in the middle dialogues, Plato conceives of the Forms as being perfect transcendent entities, different from the immanent characteristics or properties that sensible objects have that resemble the perfect Forms.[6] Doctrines of immanent characteristics posit a transcendent Form, plus a characteristic that resembles the Form immanent within the sensible object. The sensible object does not "take part" in the Form directly, so to speak (its immanent characteristic does), but instead

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[5]Ross (1966, 230) holds this view, as does, more recently, Devereux (1999, 192-214, esp. 209-210). Crombie (1963, 252), does not. Allen (1970, 129-164, esp. 147) argues agains Ross, claiming that the Forms are transcendent throughout Plato's dialogues. Ross (1966, 228-230), like Fujisawa, also identifies different terms relating to the Form-sensibles relationship, and charts their appearances in Plato's dialogues; however, Fujisawa (1974, 40-41) rejects Ross' examination of this terminology on the grounds that it has come under heavy criticism for treating various idioms of transcendence as ones of immanence, for including instances of immanence/trancendence language that are not specifically related to the relationship between Forms and sensible objects, and for failing to identifying certain instances of Form-matter relationship terminology on his chart. Allen (1970, 145-147) also explicitly criticizes Ross's identification of immanence/transcendence terminology.

[6]These scholars include Cornford (1939, 69-99), Vlastos (1965, 258; 1978, 139-140), Hackforth (1955, 143-144), Turnbull (1958, 131-135), Allen (1978, 169-170; 1970, 164; 1983, 79, 85-87, 91), Teloh (1981, 111-112, 137), and McPherran (1988, 533). O'Brien (1967, 201-202) argues against this view.

reflects the Form because it possesses a characteristic that resembles the Form.[7] The problems associated with explanations of the Theory of Forms that posit immanent characteristics are that, first, they ignore both Formal participation- and possession-relationships, and instead limit sensible objects to reflecting the Forms, and, secondly, they posit a third class of entities alongside sensible objects and Forms (thereby ignoring the Principle of Occam's Razor).

Evidence for positing transcendent perfect Forms and immanent imperfect characteristics comes from *Parmenides* 130b, says Fujisawa, where Parmenides asks Socrates,

> "Have you yourself distinguished as separate . . . certain forms themselves, and also as separate the things that partake of them? And do you think that likeness itself is something, separate from the likeness we have?" (Gill and Ryan translation 1997, 364)[8]

In this passage, says Fujisawa, there is a clear, marked distinction between the transcendent Form of Likeness, the immanent character of likeness that is possessed by individuals, and the individual who participates in the Form of Likeness and who possesses the characteristic of likeness. Further evidence for immanent characteristics and transcendent Forms, says Fujisawa (1974, 32, n. 4), comes from the *Phaedo*: Beautiful things are beautiful because they *share in* the Beautiful (100c), each thing comes to be what it is by *sharing in* a particular reality (101c), and things acquire their names by *sharing in* the Forms (102b); but both tallness and shortness *are in* Simmias, and things

[7]Contemporary metaphysicians make a distinction between immanent universals that exist simultaneously within all of their instances, and property instances, or tropes. Unlike immanent universals, every instance of a trope to be found in an object is distinct. In discussing Formal immanence, I will not bother to distinguish between these views, as both are problematic regarding the issue of Formal immanence. Both positions are refuted by *Parmenides* 131a-b: if a universal is to be found existing simultaneously within in each of its instances, then (according to the *Parmenides*) it will no longer be one universal, but many of the same kind; however, a Form cannot be both one and many at the same time -- there exists only one of any given Form. Nor, for that matter, does a Form admit of parts (*Parmenides* 131c-e).

[8]Fujisawa quotes Cornford's translation in his article.

have opposite qualities *present in* them (103b). Thus, argues Fujisawa (1974, 32), "taking in" or "possession" expressions related to the Form-matter relationship do not actually deal with Forms, but instead with the immanent characteristics that are in sensible objects, and that are like the Forms, but are inferior to them, whereas the "participation" expressions denote sensible objects sharing in the transcendental Forms by having immanent characteristics in them.

Nevertheless, despite what Fujisawa claims, there are problems with his examples from the *Phaedo* and *Parmenides*. At 103b in the *Phaedo*, things have opposite (immanent) qualities in them, and are named after these qualities. However, at *Phaedo* 102b, things acquire their names by sharing in the Forms, but sharing in the Forms, according to Fujisawa's account (1974, 35), means coming to possess an immanent characteristic that is a likeness of a Form; consequently, one is left wondering whether or not sensible objects really do "share in" Forms or merely have certain characteristics that resemble them. At *Parmenides* 131a, things also derive their names and characteristics from sharing in the Forms. But then, at *Parmenides* 131a, Parmenides goes on to ask Socrates whether a thing shares in only a part of a Form, or shares in the Form as a whole. As the Forms are not divisible, sensible objects cannot share in parts of Forms. If sensible things share in whole Forms, then immanent characteristics are either copies of the Forms (the direct result of which is the Third Man Argument), or there are many Forms of the same kind of thing, and not just one Form, and thus the Forms are not transcendent, and there are no immanent characteristics separate from the Forms. Neither of these possibilities is acceptable, as Parmenides goes on to make clear (see 131a ff.).

There are two versions of the Third Man Argument in the *Parmenides*, the first of which appears at 132a-b. In the first argument, Parmenides suggest to Socrates that whenever one looks at a number of things that can all be classified as being large, one identifies in them a common large character, and from the fact that this character of largeness is common to all large things, one is led to conclude that there is one, and only one, Form of Largeness. However, as Parmenides goes on to point out, if one considers the set consisting of the Form of Largeness plus all large sensible objects, then one will again be able to discern a common character of largeness present among all members of the set, including the Form itself. Since there is a common character of largeness present in all members of a set that includes the Form of Largeness, there must be another Form over and above the Form of Largeness that gives the Form its characteristic largeness.

The second Third Man Argument appears at 132d-133a when Socrates suggests that the Forms are like patterns that sensible objects copy and resemble. Parmenides very quickly dispenses with this suggestion of Socrates' by pointing out that an original and a copy must resemble each other in terms of some characteristic. If a Form is the original and sensible objects are the copies in question, then Form and copies must resemble each other in terms of some characteristic, which corresponds to a second Form, which resembles the original Form and copies in terms of some characteristic, and this characteristic must correspond to a third Form, and so forth, leading on into an infinite regress.

The Third Bed Argument of *Republic* X 597b-597d is closely associated with the Third Man Arguments of the *Parmenides*. The TBA is structured in the following manner: The Form of the Bed is the one single bed that is "in nature a bed"

(597b,Grube/Reeve translation 1997, 1201), and so "is the being of a bed" (597c, Grube/Reeve translation 1997, 1201). Only one Form of the Bed exists, for if two such Forms existed,

> then again one would come to light whose form they in turn they would both possess and *that* would be the one that is the being of a bed and not the other two. (597c, Grube/Reeve translation 1997, 1202)

In other words, there cannot be two Forms of the Bed, for, if there were, they would not possess their being independently of anything else, but would instead derive it from a third, higher, Form of the Bed, and this third Form would be the true Form of the Bed, the one that is the real being of a bed.

The problem of self-predication is associated with both the TMA and the TBA, since both arguments suggest that the characteristic that characterizes the Form, so to speak, must be predicable of the Form. Self-predication is tied to the Forms' paradigmatic function: as the Forms are paradigms, sensible objects resemble them. However, this resemblance must take place in term of some characteristic -- the very characteristic, in fact, that is considered to be the Form itself. As R. E. Allen (1978, 167) states, "the language [of Plato's self-predicative statements] suggests that the Form *has* what it *is*." On this account, the Form of Beauty is itself beautiful, just as the Form of Fire is fiery, and the Form of Three is three in number. The problem of the self-predication of Forms is further compounded by the fact that Plato predicates a number of different qualities (such as eternality and perfection, for example) of all the Forms, which suggests that not only does a Form possess the one characteristic that characterizes it, but that Forms must possess other characteristics as well, which would seem to suggest that Forms are not simple, incomposite entities after all. Moreover, in order for a Form to possess a

characteristic, it must do so by participation, thus making the problem of self-predication into one of self-participation as well.

Consequently, the *Parmenides* suggests that if Plato posits both immanent characteristics and transcendent Forms, then he is committed to the absurdity of the TMA. Therefore, either Plato does not posit both immanent characteristics and transcendent Forms, but instead has something else in mind with respect to the Form-sensible object relationship, or he accepts the TMA as a necessary absurdity within his theory. In this thesis, I shall attempt to suggest a way in which Plato may have circumvented the TMA and the problems that follow from the ontological divide between sensible objects and Forms.

However, before moving on to a new topic of discussion, there is a second aspect of the immanence and/or transcendence of Forms that must be discussed. Fujisawa examines the usage of Form-matter relationship terminology from a chronological standpoint, examining where and when certain terminology appears in the approximate time-frame of Plato's thought. Prior (1985), by contrast, suggests that Plato posits the Forms as either immanent or transcendent depending on what sort of function they are to serve. Prior (1985, 12) claims that in the early and middle dialogues, the Forms perform the causal function of making sensible entities the particular sorts of things that they are, and cites passages from the *Euthyphro* and *Phaedo* in order to support his claim. According to Prior, when the Forms function as causes, they are immanent in sensible objects. At *Euthyphro* 5d, Socrates questions, "Is not the pious the same and alike in every action?"(Grube translation 1997, 5) According to Prior, this statement gives evidence that the Form of Piety is present in the actions of the pious individual. As well,

Prior cites *Euthyphro* 6d-e as an example of a Form serving as the cause of a thing's having a particular characteristic: Socrates demands that Euthyphro name

> that form itself that makes all pious actions pious, for you agreed that all impious actions are impious and all pious actions pious through one form. (Grube translation 1997, 5)

I do not deny that at *Euthyphro* 6d-e, the Form of Piety is fulfilling a causal function. That Forms are responsible for sensible things possessing the characteristics that they do is a fairly orthodox view, and one that, I think, is really in perfect accordance with Plato's own thought. I do, however, have a problem with Prior's *Euthyphro* example. The wider discussion at 5c-d is as follows:

> SOCRATES: So tell me now, by Zeus, what you just now maintained you clearly knew: what kind of thing do you say that godliness and ungodliness are, both as regards murder and other things; or is the pious not the same and alike in every action, and the impious the opposite of all that is pious and like itself, and everything that is to be impious presents us with one form or appearance in so far as it is impious?
> EUTHYPHRO: Most certainly, Socrates.
> SOCRATES: Tell me then, what is the pious, and what the impious, do you say? (Grube translation 1997, 5)

In this passage, what Socrates wants to know is what kind of thing either the characteristic of piety or the Form of Piety is. Now there are a couple of good answers Euthyphro could give to this question. If all Socrates wants is a simple definition of the word, "piety," Euthyphro could answer that the characteristic of piety is a virtue, or that it is a good thing. On the other hand, if what Socrates wants is a description of the Form, Piety, then Euthyphro could answer that it is a divine, immaterial, insensible, eternal, indestructible thing, the thing that makes all actions pious. All pious actions are pious because they participate in the Form of Piety. But all pious actions are pious also because they have the characteristic of piety. So, an action is pious both because it participates in the Form of Piety and also because it has the characteristic of being pious. The question

that remains is whether participating in the Form of piety and having the characteristic of piety amount to the same thing, or if the two are separate conditions that must both be fulfilled in order for a thing to be pious. The *Euthyphro*, though, explicitly states that the Form of Piety is what makes all actions pious. Therefore, the Form of Piety is directly responsible for pious actions being pious. But does participating in the Form of Piety "give" things a pious-characteristic that is separate from the Form, or is participating in a Form directly equivalent to having a characteristic; in other words, is the Form of Piety nothing other than the characteristic of piety?

I think that the only thing that can be concluded at this point is that taking the passage at *Euthyphro* 5d-e on its own leaves one unsure of what exactly Socrates is talking about. On the one hand, the passage might not be dealing with Forms as characterized by the Theory of Forms at all, and the "forms" to which Socrates refers might just be simple definitions of piety and impiety. If this is the case, then *Euthyphro* 5d-e is neither an instance of Forms acting as causes or as Forms as immanent in sensible matter. And, following from this, it is quite possible that none of the so-called early dialogues discuss the Forms of the Theory of Forms at all. On the other hand, if the passage really is dealing with Forms, then:

a) there is no difference between Forms and the characteristics immanent in matter, and whatever definition Euthyphro gives of "piety" can apply equally as well to the Form itself; or,

b) what Socrates specifically wants is not a dictionary definition of what "piety" means, but a description of the characteristics of the Form of Piety.

If *both* a) and b) are true, problems result for the Theory of Forms. The Forms are responsible for making things the specific things they are. If the Form of Piety is responsible for the existence of all characteristic instances of piety, then on the grounds of the Resemblance Theory (which claims that sensible objects somehow resemble the Forms), whatever is uniquely characteristic about instances of piety in objects will be applicable to the Form as well. In other words, this means that since the Form of Largeness is responsible for all characteristic instances of largeness, and if "largeness" means "taking up a lot of space in relation to other things," then the Form of Largeness will also take up a lot of space. As what results from a) and b) is, or at least, appears to be absurd, then one would probably be tempted to assume that Plato is not talking about Forms in the *Euthyphro*; either that, or Plato must have some clever theoretical tricks up his sleeve in order to get himself out of his predicament (or perhaps, as some scholars might argue, Plato was just very confused by his own theory). But in any case, if Plato (via Socrates) is indeed talking about Forms in *Euthyphro* 5c-d, the Forms are functioning as both causes and immanent characteristics.

The other problem with Prior's alleged example of immanent Forms in the *Euthyphro* is that although the discussion at 6d would suggest that Forms are immanent in sensible objects, at 6e, there is an abrupt shift in the way "Forms" are treated in the discussion:

> SOCRATES: Tell me then what this form itself is, so that I may look upon it, and using it as a model, say that any action of yours or another's that is of that kind is pious, and if it is not that it is not. (Grube translation 1997, 6)

In this passage, if Socrates is speaking about the Form of Piety, then he is treating it as a transcendent entity, and not as being immanent within the pious object; for one is said to

look *upon* the Form, but not to look for it *in* anything. The Form of Piety is spoken about as being both a model and a standard against which the piety of actions may be judged. So, then, not only are the Forms treated as immanent in the *Euthyphro* (if the *Euthyphro* is dealing with Forms at all), but they are also treated as being transcendent. The immediate conclusion that one is most likely to make is that the *Euthyphro* cannot be dealing with Forms, since if it is, it posits Forms as being both immanent and transcendent.

However, in the middle dialogues, the Forms are, in every dialogue, treated as being both immanent and transcendent. According to Fujisawa (1974, 42) both immanence and transcendence terminology appear in every single of one of the four dialogues he identifies as belonging to the middle period (*Symposium*, *Phaedo*, *Republic*, and *Phaedrus*). Fujisawa (1974, 31-32, 36), though, argues that in the middle dialogues, the immanence terminology does not refer to the Forms themselves but to the characteristics that things possess and that deficiently resemble the Forms, whereas Prior (1985) disagrees.

The best possible example of Forms being immanent in material objects that Prior (1985, 14-15) mentions is that of Tallness and Shortness being possessed by Simmias, and therefore being in him (*Phaedo*, 102b). As Prior (1985, 46-47, n. 5) concedes, however, other commentators (like Fujisawa) have insisted that the "immanent entities" in this passage are not Forms, but instead are immanent characteristics that resemble the Forms. These commentators' claims, Prior (15, 46-47, n. 5) explains, are based upon *Phaedo* 102d-e, where it is written that if the Short, the opposite of Tallness, approaches it, then Tallness will either retreat before it or perish. Forms, however, are imperishable, and so,

presumably, the passage must not be talking about Forms but about the characteristics that objects have.

Prior (1985, 47, n. 5) cites *Parmenides* 130b as possible evidence for the doctrine of immanent characteristics where Parmenides asks Socrates if he believes that the Form of Likeness is separate from the likeness possessed by individuals, and Socrates agrees. In addition, Prior also cites *Timaeus* 51e-52c, where Being, Becoming, and the Receptacle are distinguished; presumably, the Forms correspond to Being, immanent characteristics to the things that become, and matter to the Receptacle of Becoming. However, the *Timaeus* example is not without controversy over how it should be interpreted. O'Brien (1967, 202) suggests that Forms are immanent in the Receptacle, but all this means, he argues, is that Forms exist in space, as do the things they particularize. For, argues O'Brien, all that "immanence" means with respect to Forms is that they are responsible for particularizing individuals; they are not actually *in* the individuals, but are only reflected or copied by them,[9] such that individuals are made distinguishable by their instantiating a certain Form. The particularization of Forms is not so difficult to envisage, claims O'Brien, when the Forms in question are the Forms of attributes like Tallness or Beauty, since Tallness and Beauty are particularized in bodies. But when the Forms in question are Forms such as Fire, Human Being, Table, and the like (what O'Brien rather misleadingly refers to as "substances"), it is difficult to imagine what these Forms might be particularized in. So, in the *Timaeus*, claims O'Brien, Plato explains that these sorts of Forms are particularized in space. So then, according to O'Brien's view, there are no

[9]O'Brien himself does not explain what he means by "particularization," and, indeed, this term might suggest a lot of different things. The interpretation of the term I have given is the one that I think makes the most sense as understood in relation to the doctrines of Plato, and, more specifically, the Theory of Resemblance.

such things as "immanent" Forms *per se*, although he seems to concede that the term might be used in a sort of vulgar sense to refer to the Form-sensible relationship. Certainly O'Brien denies that there exist any such entities as immanent characteristics in sensible objects.[10] Yet O'Brien's talk of "particularization" suggests that sensible objects (or certain sections of space or matter) have characteristics that resemble the Forms, and it is by the possession of these characteristics that they are particularized and individuated. Unless O'Brien accepts the view that holds that sensible objects possess immanent characteristics, he is committed to one of either of two claims:

a) he does not know how it is, precisely, that Forms are "particularized" in objects, and so the riddle of the Form-sensible relation remains unsolved; or,

b) "particularization" means either "one over many" or "one multiplied among many," and both of these conceptions of the Form-sensible object relationship are explicitly rejected in the *Parmenides* (131a-e).

In the case of b), Parmenides rejects the possibility that one Form might be somehow multiplied among many sensible objects on the grounds that this would entail that Forms could no longer be single unities, but one Form would instead be many and separate (131a-b). And, Parmenides also rejects the possibility that one Form might be a sort of "umbrella" over its many instances, on the grounds that this would mean that sensible objects partake only of parts of Forms, thus entailing that Forms are divisible (131b-c), and so, presumably, are also composite and perishable, and not whole, incomposite, and eternal. Whether or not Parmenides' rejections of the "one over many" and "one multiplied among many" characterizations of the Form-sensible object relationship are

[10] "The truth is that Plato in the *Phaedo*, from the point of view of the theory of forms, thinks of only two levels, form and the particularization of form" (O'Brien 1967, 201).

capable of being challenged is another issue; nevertheless, a face-value reading of the *Parmenides* suggests that O'Brien's "particularization" conception of the Form-sensible object relation is not without serious problems.

It could be argued in O'Brien's defense that *Republic* V, 475e-476a contradicts *Parmenides* 131a-c:

> [Socrates:] Since the beautiful is the opposite of the ugly, they are two.
> [Glaucon:] Of course.
> [Socrates:] And since they are two, each is one?
> [Glaucon:] I grant that also.
> [Socrates]: And the same account is true of the just and the unjust, the good and the bad, and all the forms. Each of them is itself one, but because they manifest themselves everywhere in association with actions, bodies, and one another, each of them appears to be many. (Grube/Reeve translation 1997, 1102)

According to this passage, each of the Forms is really one, but appears to be many because it is manifested *in* sensible phenomena. Therefore, one might argue, here is a middle-period passage that lends support to the notion of the immanence of Forms, and that serves to counter the criticisms of the *Parmenides*. Quite to the contrary of such an argument, though, I think that this passage from the *Republic* really does not lend any support to O'Brien's claims, due to the fact that the passage does not state that the Forms *are* many, in the sense that one Form is copied *into* each individual sensible phenomenon, but rather that the Forms only *appear* to be many, manifested *in association with* sensible phenomena (and other Forms), and not *by* sensible phenomena, or *in* sensible phenomena. Thus what the the passage claims is only that Forms are related to sensible phenomena, and that they appear to be many, but of course, appearances may be deceiving, and for Plato, appearances belong to the realm of the sensible, imperfect, and fallible, and so what appears to be may not really be at all. Consequently, O'Brien's position is still fraught with problems.

But what about Prior's citation of *Parmenides* 130b? It clearly does appear to indicate that Plato posited immanent characteristics in sensible objects, characteristics that are distinct from and separate from the Forms. However, *Parmenides* 130b, too, is controversial, for the issue of the separateness of Forms is raised in the form of a question posed by Parmenides to the young Socrates: " 'Have you yourself distinguished as separate, in the way you mention, certain forms themselves, and also as separate the things that partake of them?' " (Gill and Ryan translation 1997, 364) Socrates replies affirmatively to this question, but I think that his doing so should lead one to wonder if Socrates should be thinking of the Forms as separate and apart from sensible objects in the first place. Perhaps Socrates is just plain wrong and Forms are *not* separate from sensible objects. Now, my suggesting such a possibility is not without controversy, for, one might argue, there is plenty of evidence that can be used to demonstrate that the interpretation of *Parmenides* 130b suggested above makes no sense when taken in relation to other statements made in Plato's dialogues about the nature of Forms.

First of all, evidence against the immanence of Forms comes from passages in the *Cratylus* (389b-c), *Republic* X (596b), and the *Timaeus* (28c-29a, 30c-31a) which describe craftsmen (of various sorts) as looking *to* the form of an object so that, as they are fabricating an object, they will "put *into* [italics mine] it the nature that naturally best suits it to perform its own work" (*Cratylus*, 389b-c, Reeve translation 1997, 108). In other words, these passages indicate that the Form of an object is something that is separate from it, and so may be intellectually beheld. Furthermore, looking to the Form of an object allows the craftsmen to put, not the Form, but a certain *nature*, or perhaps, *character* into an object. Thus the "craftsmen passages" indicate that not only are Forms

separate from sensible objects, but that sensible objects possess characteristics which are the products of some sort of relation with a Form. A similar instance of this looking *to* a Form is to be found in the *Euthyphro* [11]: At 6e, Socrates demands that Euthyphro tell him what the Form of Piety is, so that Socrates may look upon it and use it as a model or standard by which to judge the relative piety and impiety of various acts.

Secondly, evidence for the separateness of Forms can be found in the image of the Divided Line in *Republic* VI. The Line is divided into two sections, one part representing the world of the visible (or sensible), and the other part representing the world of the intelligible (509d). One part of the intelligible consists of the things that are hypothesized, certain first principles for which no account is available (510c). These first principles resemble visible things, and visible things may be used as images from which to proceed to knowledge of the first principles that cannot be seen with the eye but that can be known only through thought (510d-e). The other part of the intelligible consists of hypotheses that are not first principles, but that are nevertheless understood by means of reason and dialectic, and which are used to lead as stepping stones to "the unhypothetical first principle of everything" (*Republic* VII, 511b, Grube/Reeve translation 1997, 1132). Once the rational soul grasps the unhypothetical first principle, using Forms, the soul may reason its way down to a conclusion understood in terms of Forms (511b-c). Regardless of which of the sections of the intelligible part of the Divided Line refer to the Forms specifically (both, perhaps), the analogy of the Divided Line clearly separates that which is purely intelligible, as the Forms are, from the sensible, yet that which is sensible still remains related to the intelligible, as the sensible is an image of the intelligible.

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[11]Presuming, of course, that one maintains that the forms of the *Euthyphro* really are the Forms of the Theory of Forms.

Thirdly, Diotima's speech in the *Symposium* (211a-b) also provides evidence for the theory of the separateness of Forms. The Form of the Beautiful is different from the beauty that we perceive, as it is always unvaryingly beautiful, and it is beautiful on its own, not being dependent upon anything else for its beauty. More importantly, the Form of Beauty is not in any physical object, or in anything at all, for that matter, although all beautiful things do share in it. As well, the Form of Beauty is not, according to Diotima's speech, an idea, thought, or concept, a claim that is repeated of the Forms in general by Parmenides at *Parmenides* 132b-c. As a result, Diotima's speech in the *Symposium* appears to lend a great deal of support to the position of those who wish to argue that the Forms exist apart from sensible objects. And, in addition, Diotima's speech suggests that the imperfect, variable, sensible beauty that human beings are capable of perceiving in sensible phenomena, is, in fact, an immanent characteristic within such phenomena.

Fourth, the *Phaedrus* also suggests that the Forms are separate, in that in the myth of the soul's journey through the heavens, the souls journey upward until they reach "the high ridge of heaven" and then they stand upon it to "gaze upon what is outside heaven" (247b-c, Nehamas and Woodruff translation 1997, 525) And what is "outside heaven?" According to the *Phaedrus*, what the strongest and most virtuous souls are able to observe on their heavenly journey are the Forms that exist in a realm that is separate even from heaven, as it is a purely intelligible world that can be known only by the intellect, and not through the senses; it is the realm of what is truly real. According to this account, then, the Forms exist in a purely intelligible realm that is completely separate from anything known through the senses (247c-e); nevertheless, the objects of the sensible

world are related to the Forms, as they are likenesses and images of them (250b). Thus, although the Forms are separate from the sensible world, they are still related to it.

However, as compelling evidence for the separateness of Forms view that the *Phaedrus* myth of the soul's journey is, it is not capable of remaining unchallenged. For, later in the *Phaedrus*, it is said that Beauty was the most radiant of the Forms (250b-d), and it is capable of being grasped by the sense of sight (250d). These particular lines seem to contradict the claim that the Forms are separate from sensible objects due to their purely intelligible nature. Yet, shortly after this, it is written that although sensible beauty resembles the Form of Beauty, it is nowhere nearly as dazzling as the Form (250e), a claim which seems to suggest that the Form of Beauty is separate from the characteristic of beauty that is immanent within sensible objects. But then, at 251a, Socrates in his speech speaks of "a godlike face or bodily form that has captured Beauty well" (Nehamas and Woodruff translation 1997, 528), a phrase which appears to indicate that the Form of Beauty is immanent as a whole within sensible objects, and that the Form is itself is the characteristic of beauty within beautiful things. Consequently, it is unclear as to what sort of position the *Phaedrus* takes with respect to the transcendence or immanence of Forms.

A fifth piece of evidence against the "immanent" account of the Forms can be found in the *Parmenides*, where Socrates asks Parmenides if he acknowledges " 'that there is a form, itself by itself, of likeness?' " (129a, Gill and Ryan translation 1997, 362-363). The expression, "itself by itself" (*auto kath 'auto*) would seem to indicate that Socrates really believes that each and every Form is separate from all other Forms, as well as from sensible objects. However, there are two ways of interpreting the Greek for "itself by itself" (Gill & Ryan, *Parmenides*: 362-363, n. 4). One is the way I have just

mentioned, and that is to suggest that the subject of the expression is apart or isolated from other things. The other possible way of interpretation is for the phrase to be taken to mean "in virtue of, or because of, itself" -- in other words, the Form of Likeness is responsible for its own being, and exists as what it is purely of its own power, not depending for its being upon the being of any other thing. If "itself by itself' is interpreted in the first way, it does count as evidence against the "non-separateness" of Forms. However, if the phrase is interpreted in the second manner, it suggests that the separateness of Forms needs to be treated in an entirely different way, for then the Forms are not separate from things in the sense of being transcendent or apart or isolated, but, rather, are separate and apart from each other and sensible objects in the sense that each is capable of existing on its own. Therefore, the "itself by itself" of the *Parmenides* does, in a sense, lend support to the separateness of Forms view, but suggests that the whole issue of Formal immanence and/or transcendence might really be a non-issue for Plato. It might be that Plato does not conceive of the Forms as being either immanent or transcendent, or that he conceives of them as being both immanent and transcendent, and so does not care what sort of language is used in discussion of the relationship between Forms and sensible objects (see *Phaedo* 100d). Crombie (1963, 251-252) argues that the fact that in some cases the Forms are referred to in language that would indicate that they are transcendent, and that in other cases the Forms are referred to in language that would suggest that they are immanent in sensible objects, is of no great importance, and indicates merely a desire on the part of Plato to vary his terminology. Indeed, the passage from the *Phaedo* that Crombie (1963, 252, n. 1) cites does provide support for his statement:

> Nothing else makes [a thing] beautiful other than the presence of, or the sharing in, or however you may describe its relationship to that Beautiful we mentioned, for I will not

insist on the precise nature of the relationship . . . . (100d, Grube translation 1977, 86)[12]

In this passage, Socrates does not seem to be too concerned at all with what sort of terminology is used to describe the relationship between Forms and sensible objects. However, Socrates' relative unconcern with terminology still leaves open the question of how it is that Forms relate to sensible objects. In other words, even if there is no need to be precise about terminology, the question still remains: are Forms immanent, transcendent, both, or neither? And, despite Crombie's attempt to brush it off,[13] this question cannot be ignored, as is evidenced by the fact that few scholars hold Crombie's view on this matter. Even if Forms are neither immanent nor transcendent, such a fact is an important one to take note of, as it provides a clue as to what sort of relation might hold between Forms and matter. And, more importantly, it provides a clue as to what the Forms are.

Following directly from the transcendence/immanence debate is the discussion as to whether or not the Forms are paradigms, and if they are, what exactly is entailed by the term "paradigm" used with respect to the Forms. William Prior (1985, 17) asserts that the term *paradeigma* (paradigm), one of the terms used by Plato in the discussion of the Forms, means "standard."[14] Allen (1978, 171; also 1970, 70-74) also agrees that Forms are standards and paradigms.

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[12]Crombie translates only a part of the passage I have quoted.

[13]"The truth seems to be that Plato was always more satisfied that there exist such principles [the Forms] . . . , than that any particular account of them is correct" (Crombie 1963, 252).

[14]Geach (1965, 267), Vlastos (1973, 227; also 1965, 287) Malcolm (1991, 70), and Fine (1993, 53, 63) all agree with this definition, as do Cross and Woozley (1978, 83-84) and Teloh (1981, 37), although Teloh believes that *paradeigma* can also be equivalent in meaning to "example" or "pattern," and Cross and Woozley do not explicity associate *paradeigma* with the English-language term "standard." White (1979, 39) claims that *paradeigma* means "model," and that a model is a type of exemplar. Whether or not White believes that exemplars and models are themselves types of standards is not clear.

According to Allen, relations are necessary in order for the discussion of standards to be coherent. Whenever one speaks of something for which a standard has been established (such as standards for units of mass), one will be talking about that thing as it is in relation to its standard. For example, if I buy five hundred grams of cheese at the delicatessen, I am relating the mass of the cheese to the standard for one gram, that being one one-thousandth of the mass of the chunk of metal that serves as the international prototype of the kilogram. And, when I make this relation between the mass of the cheese and the standard gram, the relation with which I am dealing is one of equivalency: my chunk of cheese is equal to five hundred standard grams, or one-half of the mass of the chunk of metal that serves as the international prototype of the kilogram (cf. Allen 1978, 170-171; also Geach 1965, 267).

Allen's claim that relations are necessary to standards proves to be quite revealing, as far as the question of whether or not the Forms are standards is concerned. For Plato, all rational processes amount to types of comparison which are similar to those that are involved in measurement (see *Protagoras* 356a-357b). But all standards are standards of comparison, since the point of setting up a standard for anything is to have a paradigm that can serve as an indicator of how things of the same sort as the standard *should be*. One looks to the standard, and then compares the object in question to it, trying to determine to what degree and in what respects it is different from, or like to the standard. Then, based on the comparison, one makes a judgement about the object in question: is it a good object of that sort, being in the way it should be? In other words, in order for one to use standards as the basis of judgement, the things judged according to the standard must be related to it in terms of similarity. And, in the case of the Forms, sensible objects

are said to be like the Forms, but fall short of them, and so are related to the Forms in terms of likeness or similarity (see *Phaedo* 74a ff.). Therefore, if the Forms are standards of judgement, it is clear that one of the necessary conditions in order for them to be such is fulfilled: relations of likeness and similarity exist between sensible objects and Forms.

To summarize what I have stated: standards are used as the basis for making comparative judgements in order that the relative goodness (be it either ontological, epistemological, aesthetic, or ethical in nature) of the way of being of objects similar to the standard may be measured. If Forms are standards, a relationship of similarity exists between sensible phenomena and Forms in that sensibles are said to be likenesses of Forms. Forms are used as the basis for making comparative judgements about sensible phenomena, and, as the *Protagoras* demonstrates, these comparative judgements are made in order that the relative goodness (either ontological, epistemological, aesthetic, or ethical) of sensible objects may be measured:

> "For if someone were to say: 'But Socrates, the immediate pleasure is very much different from the pleasant and the painful at a later time,' I would reply, 'They are not different in any other way than by pleasure and pain, for there is no other way that they could differ. Weighing is a good analogy; you put the pleasures together and the pains together, both the near and the remote, on the balance scale, and then say which of the two is more. . . . Does it seem any different to you, my friends?' I know that they would not say otherwise."
>
> Protagoras assented.
>
> "Since this is so, I will say to them: 'Answer me this: Do things of the same size appear to you larger when seen near at hand and smaller when seen from a distance, or not?' They would say they do. 'And similarly for thicknesses and pluralities? And equal sounds seem louder when near at hand, softer when farther away?' They would agree. 'If then our well-being depended upon this, doing and choosing large things, avoiding and not doing the small ones, what would we see as our salvation in life? Would it be the art of measurement or the power of appearance? While the power of appearance often makes us wander all over the place in confusion, often changing our minds about the same things and regretting our actions and choices with respect to things large and small, the art of measurement in contrast, would make the appearances lose their power by showing us the truth, would give us peace of mind firmly rooted in the truth and would save our life.' Therefore, would these men agree, with this in mind, that the art of measurement would save us, or some other art?"
>
> "I agree, the art of measurement would."

> "What if our salvation in life depended on our choices of odd and even, when the greater and the lesser had to be counted correctly, either the same kind against itself or one kind against the other, whether it be near or remote? What then would save our life? Surely nothing other than knowledge, specifically some kind of measurement, since that is the art of the greater and the lesser? In fact, nothing other than arithmetic, since it's a question of the odd and the even? Would these men agree with us or not?"
>
> Protagoras thought that they would agree.
>
> "Well, then, my good people: Since it has turned out that our salvation in life depends on the right choice of pleasures and pains, be they more or fewer, greater or lesser, farther or nearer, doesn't our salvation seem, first of all, to be measurement, which is the study of relative excess and deficiency and quality?"
>
> "It must be."
>
> "And since it is measurement, it must definitely be an art, and knowledge."
>
> (*Protagoras* 356a-357b, Lombardo and Bell translation 1997, 785-786)

In this passage, measurement is the means to knowledge of the good. One's "salvation in life depends on the right choice of pleasures and pains," meaning that in order for one to have a *good* life, one must make the right choices that will enable one to achieve the most beneficial state of being possible. And, the way to make good choices, according to Socrates, is through measurement, which is a process of comparison between the greater and the lesser, the better and the worse. Measurement reveals the truth of how things really are, whereas raw sense-perception reveals only how things appear to be.[15] Appearances vary according to circumstance, and so are confusing and unreliable, and therefore can easily lead one to make bad judgements, *false* judgements about how things are. For, in order to live one's life well, one must know the truth about what really is, in order that one's actions will line up (see *Theaetetus* 193d-e)[16] and be in harmony with how the world really is. In order to have a good life, one must "fit in" with the rest of the world; if one's actions are out of place or out of line, one's life is disharmonious and in discord with the rest of reality, and, essentially, one ends up living one's life as a misfit

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[15]See *Philebus* 55e-56c.

[16]In this passage from the *Theaetetus*, the "lining up" that is referred to takes place between perceptions of things and knowledge of them; however, although the subject matter of the *Theaetetus* is epistemological, I think that it is fairly safe to say that Plato would probably apply a fairly similar "lining up" analogy when the subject matter at hand is ethical (or for that matter, ontological) in nature.

within the world (see *Laches* 188c-d; *Republic* IV 443c-444a, IX 591a-d; *Philebus* 31d; *Timaeus* 90c-d).

So, as appearances are deceiving, one cannot rely upon sense-perceptions as the basis of one's judgements; instead, one must use the powers of one's rational intellect, which cannot perceive appearances, as it is a power of the mind or soul, and not one of the bodily senses. Reason is a process of comparison, where opposite but related properties[17] are compared to each other in order to determine which in a pair is more prominent, given the circumstances. However, where reason and sense-perception differ is in that, whereas circumstances are not taken into account in sense-perception, reason is capable of considering all relevant factors that may affect the prominence of the properties involved in a pair of opposites. For example, in the passage quoted from the *Protagoras*, "equal sounds seem louder when near at hand, softer when farther away." In this case, different distances between the sources and the perceiver are affecting how loudly the two sounds are perceived. Sense-perception only takes into account raw, uninterpreted data: Sound A appears to be louder than Sound B, and that is all the information that sense-perception can give. By contrast, in reasoning, one can ask, "Why is Sound A louder than Sound B?" and then by taking into account factors that may make the loudness of Sound A seem different from, or similar to, the loudness of Sound B, one can rationally compare and "measure" the sounds against each other. Once other factors affecting the volume of sound have been taken into account, one rationally concludes that the two sounds must really be equal in volume, but only appear to differ, due to the fact that their loudness is modified by distance between source and perceiver.

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[17]I am using this term in a loose, non-technical sense.

Presumably, then, if mental reasoning is a tool for comparison of the properties of an object in order to determine which are real and which are only perceived, the rational soul (or mind) must operate according to a set of standards so that its comparative judgements will be consistent. And, it is the Forms that serve as this set of standards of comparative judgement. For, in the case of the Forms, sensible phenomena remind one of the Forms, and their likeness to, or difference from the Forms is compared and judged. In other words, the Forms serve as standards of comparative judgement when it comes to determining how things ought to be. The more a sensible property (such as being an apple, being red, being three-dimensional, or being juicy) resembles or is like its respective Form, the more ontologically real and epistemologically reliable it is. And, for Plato, the more real and true a thing is, the better its state of being is. The question that remains at this point, though, is what exactly is meant by sensible objects resembling the Forms, as resemblance is not as straightforward a concept as it might seem to be, especially because in this case one is dealing with resemblance between sensible phenomena and insensible Forms.

Up to this point, I have attempted to provide evidence to support the position that the Forms are standards, and therefore are also paradigms. Nevertheless, it could be argued that there are a number of different types of standards, and that if the claim that Forms are standards is to be meaningful at all, it must be ascertained what sort (or sorts) of standard(s) the Forms are. I shall begin by dividing the concept of the standard into two general categories: absolute standards and relative standards. For the purposes of this thesis, I shall term "absolute standards," as those that denote the extremes along some scale of comparison. Absolute standards cannot be equalled or surpassed by the things

that are judged according to them either in terms of reality, verity, or virtue or else in terms of their lack of these qualities. In short, absolute standards either represent the very best of a given thing, quality or characteristic, or the very worst.[18]

Whereas absolute standards draw the baseline for comparative judgement at perfection, with what I will term "relative standards," the baseline for judgement may be drawn anywhere. In the case of absolute standards, anything that is judged against the standard will be unable to surpass it in terms of reality, verity, or goodness. By contrast, in the case of relative standards, things that are judged against the standard could exceed the standard along the scale of comparison. For example, if I were to take what I thought to be the best answer to an exam essay question and, setting up the answer as an absolute standard, assigned the answer a grade of one hundred percent, all other answers to that question would be judged against the standard, and would have to receive grades of less than one hundred percent.[19] However, if I took just any answer to the question and used that as my standard for grading the answers, some answers would most likely turn out to be of higher quality than my standard, and others would be of lower quality. The grades I would assign all answers to the question would be granted based on their quality relative to my standard answer. And, in addition, what I took the quality of my standard answer to be might have to be adjusted after I read some of the other answers, thus making my standard answer a relative standard.

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[18]It could be argued that perhaps the term "ideal standard" is more appropriate in this case; however, as there may be some variation in the interpretation of the meaning of "ideal," I would, for the purposes of this thesis, prefer to use "absolute."

[19]Of course, in a *real* marking situation, it is possible for more than one paper to receive a grade of one hundred percent, but as I am defining the absolute standard, there can be only *one* such standard.

I would caution, though, that "standard," in the case of relative standards, does not necessarily mean "average," "typical," or "common." In the essay answer grading example, I could have chosen an average paper to be my relative standard, but there is nothing about relative standards that dictates that I *must* choose what I think to be an average answer as my standard answer. While choosing an average or typical answer to be my standard would probably make my task of grading papers easier, relative standards need not represent the average, the typical, or the common. The only thing that makes a relative standard a relative one is that the baseline for judgement is not intentionally drawn at an extreme; a relative standard represents neither the very best nor the very worst of its kind (as absolute standards do).

One problem that arises here in the case of the graded papers, and similarly in the case of the standard metric gram, is the question of what exactly is the standard. While in the case of the essay answer the physical piece of paper, or, in the case of the standard metric gram, a certain metal cube, may exemplify the standard, it is not really the standard itself. For example, if a person mixing house paints is presented with a chip that is a certain shade of green, and is told to mix five cans of that shade of green, it is not the chip itself that the mixer is attempting to copy, but the shade of green in the chip. Likewise, if a machine in a garment factory cuts out collars according to a certain pattern, it is not the pattern on paper that the machine is replicating, but the shape and dimensions of the pattern. Similarly, when I go to the delicatessen and ask for five hundred grams of cheese, I am not asking for my cheese to be transmuted into five hundred metal blocks. Instead, I want the *mass* of my cheese to be (as nearly as possible) equivalent to the mass of five hundred standard one-gram metal blocks.

In all circumstances, the standard is *that which is to be resembled* to either a greater or lesser degree -- and this applies just as much in the case of relative standards as it does in the case of absolute standards. Although a relative standard may be surpassed, it may be surpassed to either a greater or lesser degree, and the more something surpasses a relative standard in quality, the less it will resemble the standard. However, the hypothetical cases with which I am dealing, those of the one gram metal cube and the perfect essay answer, deal with absolute, and not relative, standards. In the case of the essay answer, what is to be replicated is the general content of the answer, that being the ideas presented therein. Similarly, in the case of the standard metric gram, what is to be replicated in this particular instance is the real mass of the cube; what value that mass has and what sorts of units one is using to measure the mass is not really important. It does not matter what the cube is *called*; rather, what is to be measured against the standard metric gram are the masses of objects, and so it is the *mass* of the cube that is important, and that is the real standard. To repeat: in the case of standards, it is the *quality* that is to be resembled to either a greater or lesser degree that is the standard. If that standard happens to be associated with some object (such as a metal cube in some Bureau of Standards), the other qualities possessed by this object are merely peripheral to the standard and are part of the standard in only an accidental sense.

In addition, it should also be kept in mind that the quality that is held up to a standard and judged need not be an abstract quality such as a set of ideas or a certain mass. It could be something much more concrete and directly perceivable, such as a colour (as in the case of the green paint chip) or a shape (as in the case of the garment pattern). But even though some of the qualities that may be judged against a standard

may be concrete in this sense, not all standards need to be physically embodied. For example, a set of criteria for grading essay answers is a standard, as all essay answers graded will be examined in the light of those criteria, a comparison will be made in order to determine how those answers "match up" to the criteria, and then the answers will be judged accordingly, based on their approximation to the criteria. This set of criteria need not be (and usually is not) physically embodied.

Obviously, the Forms are supposed to be absolute standards,[20] and there is ample evidence for this in Plato's dialogues. First of all, Plato makes it quite clear that there is only *one* Form corresponding to any given entity (*Euthyphro* 6d-e; *Meno* 72a-e; *Republic* VI 507b; *Parmenides* 135b-c; *Theaetetus* 146e; implied by *Symposium* 211c-d). If the Forms were relative standards, it would be possible for the sensible objects compared to them to equal or even surpass them in reality, beauty, or perfection. However, as there is only one Form corresponding to any given kind of sensible object, and the Forms are eternal, ungenerated, invariable, and so forth, and sensible objects are not, any individual Form will be superior to any sensible object compared to it in terms of its being.

Furthermore, the dialogues themselves discuss the Forms in ways that suggest that they are absolute standards. In the *Phaedo*, sensible objects are said to "strive to reach" the Forms but fall short of doing so, and so are deficient in terms of their being and are inferior to the Forms (74d-75b, Grube translation 1997, 65-66). In the *Symposium*, the Form of Beauty is never beautiful only in relation to something else; in other words the beauty of the Form of Beauty is not relative, and thus dependent upon circumstance (211a). In the Myth of the Divine Procession in the *Phaedrus*, the Form of Knowledge

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[20]Cross and Woozley (1978, 83-84) also list the Forms as being absolute or "ideal" standards.

that exists beyond heaven is superior to ordinary knowledge in that "it is the knowledge of what really is what it is," (247e, Nehamas and Woodruff translation 1997, 525) unlike ordinary knowledge, which varies in relation to the circumstances in which the potential knower is to be found (247d-e). The Forms that exist beyond the divine realm are what is truly real, whereas the earthly things that people think are real are not (249c). And, in addition, more importantly, the Forms are said to be *perfect* (250c).

In the image of the Divided Line at the end of Book VI of the *Republic* (509d-511e), the objects of understanding (Forms, presumably) belong to the highest division of the line, with all other entities sitting below them on the line, including objects of belief, or sensible objects. Earlier in the dialogue it is said that:

> When [the soul] focuses on something illuminated by truth and what is, it understands, knows, and apparently possesses understanding, but when it focuses on what is mixed with obscurity, on what comes to be and passes away, it opines and is dimmed, changes its opinions this way and that, and seems bereft of understanding. (VI 508d, Grube/Reeve translation 1997, 1129)

In other words, in the *Republic*, Socrates associates the understanding of Forms, the objects of "truth and what is" with knowledge. Opinion and belief focus on what is mixed, obscured, generated, destructible, and changing; in other words, the objects of opinion, sensible objects, are less real than the Forms that truly and purely are (that entailing being eternal, ungenerated, invariable, and pure), but are more real than "what in no way is" (V, 477a-b, Grube/Reeve translation 1997, 1103-1104). Later in the *Republic*, in Book X, it is affirmed that there is only "a single Form in connection with each of the many things to which we apply the same name" (596a, Grube/Reeve translation 1997, 1200), and there is only *one* Form that is the Form of the true, real being of anything (596b-597d). Everything that is not a Form is simply an imitation, a likeness that is similar to a Form,

but is deficient to it with respect to its truth, and incomplete in its being (596e-597a, 597e-598b).

Finally, in the *Timaeus*, the Demiurge models the universe after the Form of the Living Thing, which is the best of all the "intelligible things" (30c-d, Zeyl translation 1997, 1238; see also 29a). The Form of the Living Thing belongs to the realm of "that which always is," and is "grasped by understanding" and is ungenerated and unchanging (27d-28a, Zeyl translation 1997, 1234). The objects of sense-perception belong to the realm of "that which becomes but never is," (27d-28a, Zeyl translation 1997, 1234) and are always changing, coming to be and passing away, but never *really* being and remaining in the same state. So, although the sensible universe resembles the Form of the Living Thing, judged in comparison to the Living Thing, the sensible universe is inferior to it in terms of its being. And, in comparison to all the intelligible things in the universe, the Form of the Living Thing is the *best*, thus making it an absolute standard.

Another characteristic of absolute standards is that, whereas all standards may be used to judge the "goodness" of a thing, relative to its similarity to, or difference from, the standard, with absolute standards the baseline for judgement is drawn at the best. Therefore, for a thing to closely approximate an absolute standard is for it to come as close as possible to being in the best way that is possible for it to be. The more like to the standard an object is, the more it is being in the way it *should* be, which is, therefore, the *best* way for it to be, as an object of that type.

At *Republic* VI 506a, Socrates says,

> I don't suppose, at least, that just and fine things will have acquired much of a guardian in someone who doesn't even know in what way they are good. And I divine that no one will have adequate knowledge of them until he knows this. (Grube/Reeve translation 1997, 1126-1127)

Not long after this statement of Socrates', Glaucon begs Socrates to give an account of the Good, just as Socrates had given accounts of Justice and other Virtues earlier in the dialogue (506d). Socrates refuses Glaucon's plea, claiming that the Good is simply too big a topic for the group's discussion; instead, says Socrates, "I am willing to tell you about what is apparently an offspring of the good and most like it" (506d-e, Grube/Reeve translation 1997, 1127). And, this offspring of the Good to which Socrates refers turns out to be none other than the body of entities known as the Forms, things that are "intelligible but not visible" and that are the being of each sensible thing belonging to a certain kind (507b, Grube/Reeve translation 1997, 1128). Somewhat earlier in the dialogue, Socrates explains that "every soul pursues the good and does whatever it does for its sake" (505e, Grube/Reeve translation 1997, 1126), but although "everyone wants the things that really *are* good and disdains mere belief here" (505d, Grube/Reeve translation 1997, 1126), many people are content with their own beliefs about what is good, beliefs that, if they are not accompanied by true understanding of the Good (506c) may very well be wrong, or, are, at the very most, "lucky guesses" about what really is good. Later, Socrates goes on to say that

> when the soul focuses on something illuminated by truth and what is, it understands, knows, and apparently possesses understanding, but when it focuses on what is mixed with obscurity, on what comes to be and passes away, it opines and is dimmed, changes it opinions this way and that, and seems bereft of understanding.[21] . . .
>
> So what gives truth to the things known and the power to know to the knower is the form of the good. (508d-e, Grube/Reeve translation 1997, 1129)

The offspring of the Good are the things that truly *are*, and that, as a result, may be known and understood. These "children" of the Good are clear and pure, eternal,

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[21]Note the difference here between "understanding" and "possessing understanding." To understand is to perform a certain activity. To possess understanding is to be in a *state* of understanding.

ungenerated, and indestructible, the objects of knowledge and not of opinion (and as such are presumably also unchanging). In other words, the offspring of the Good are the Forms, knowable entities intelligible to reason (but not to sense-perception), entities that truly, eternally, and invariably are, entities that are the true "beings" of things. As the Forms are both the offspring of the Good as well as the "beings" of kinds of things, then a Form must be the best way of being for any given kind of thing. For, as the Forms are the best and true "beings" of things, the "beings" of sensible objects may be compared to those of the Forms, and judged accordingly. The more like its Form a sensible object is, the better it is at being the sort of thing that it is.

According to Prior (1985, 18), there are two sorts of standards: patterns, that is, rules for the application of a term, and concrete exemplars. Prior (1985, 18) defines exemplars as being standards that tie "a concept or term to a particular which exemplifies the concept." Prior (1985, 18) then goes on to suggest that if the Forms are exemplars, then they must be "perfect instances or examples of the concepts they represent," meaning that the Form of Beauty must be a beautiful thing, the Form of Two is two things, the Form of Human Being is a person, and so forth.

Smith (1978, 150) ties paradigmatism to being a perfect exemplar of some quality, and believes that sensible objects copy Forms in the sense that Forms, at least in the case of count-nouns, are perfect or model *F*s which sensible objects imperfectly resemble. There are, however, a number of problems with Smith's attempt to account for the paradigmatic language associated with Forms. Smith (1978, 149), claims that

> every cat has a color -- except, of course, for the cat itself; we would all agree that the cat itself is neither black, nor white, nor tabby, nor any other particular shade or coloration.

Yet at the same time, Smith (1978, 148) points out that

> we ordinarily accept language very much like that with which Plato expresses pre-eminence, even in the case of count-noun predicates, without ontological qualms. We are perfectly willing to say that the cat has four feet, that it is a mammal, that it eats meat.

But if the Cat cannot be black, it cannot be four-footed either. Although cat fur may vary in colour from cat to cat, so do the number of legs that a cat may possess. A legless cat is no less a cat than one with four legs, although it does not *look* like the typical cat. Plato, however, has little interest in the appearances of things, and it makes little difference to him if a thing conforms to the conventional idea of how it should appear or not.[22] In other words, Plato's Form of the Cat does not look like a cat, and, as such, cannot be a perfect exemplar of cat-attributes, as it is not an example of any of these attributes. Consequently, being the Form of a count-noun must involve something other than merely looking like a perfect example of the noun in question. Of course, Plato would deny that the Forms are sensible objects, and so the Forms cannot be exemplars.

Therefore, although the Forms are absolute standards, they cannot be exemplars of the characteristics that define them, as a Form *is* the characteristic that defines itself. I would argue that in the case of, for example, the Form of Justice, Justice is not a thing that possesses the absolute standard of the characteristic of justice, but, rather, that the Form of Justice *is* the characteristic of justice itself. The Form of Justice is just because it is *the* characteristic of justice, considered on its own, apart from any instantiation by another

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[22]One of the main goals of the dialogue in the *Republic* is to convince Socrates' interlocutors (and the reader) that Justice is a good thing, and that it is good to be a just person. However, at *Republic* II 360b-362c, Glaucon suggests that it is quite possible for an unjust person to appear just, and that it is in fact to one's advantage to do so. If Socrates held to a view like Smith's, that appearing just constitutes being just, he would have to respond to Glaucon by insisting that the hypothetical case that Glaucon presents is, in fact, impossible, since no individual could, at the same time, be unjust and yet appear just. Of course, Socrates does not respond to Glaucon's hypothetical example in this manner, as Plato is not one to accept unquestioningly conventional beliefs about what anything should be like.

entity. And, the reason why the Form of Justice must be the absolute paradigm of justice is that it is just eternally, invariably, and essentially. The Form of Justice *is* justice, period. No other entity exists that both is just in essence *and* is eternally and invariably just. There might perhaps exist certain sensible things that act as exemplars of Justice, for although a sensible object cannot be purely and unwaveringly just, certain sensible things might remain in just states of being longer than other sensible phenomena do, and so are just with greater consistency than other sensibles, and in this way these sensible objects might be considered to be relative standards of justice, as well as exemplars (really good sensible examples) of the Form of Justice. A case in point is that of the just city and the just man that are the topic of discussion in the *Republic*. Although Socrates is uncertain as to whether or not these entities really do exist (*Republic* V 472b-e,[23] VI 498d-499d) if they were to exist, they would be sensible exemplars of Justice. Note, though, that the just city and the just man, as exemplars, are not Forms (for although Socrates is uncertain as to the existence of the just city and the just man, he professes little doubt about the existence of Forms -- see *Republic* VI 507b and also *Phaedo* 65d, 100c-e; *Symposium* 211a-212c, esp. 212b; *Parmenides* 129a).

Socrates also speaks of the just man and the just city as models, *paradeigmata*, to be copied and imitated (*Republic* V 472c, VI 500e). In the *Euthyphro*, Socrates asks Euthyphro,

> Tell me then what this form itself is, so that I may look upon it, and using it as a model [*paradeigma*], say that any action of yours or another's that is of that kind is pious, and if it is not that it is not. (6e, Grube translation 1997, 6)

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[23]See esp. 472b: "But if we discover what justice is like, will we also maintain that the just man is in no way different from the just itself, so that he is like justice in every respect? Or will we be satisfied if *he comes as close to it as possible and participates in it far more than anyone else*?" (Grube/Reeve translation 1997, 1099, italics mine).

In the *Statesman*, the Eleatic Visitor explains how it is that models are used:

> We come to be using a *model* when a given thing, which is the same in something different and distinct, is correctly identified there, and having been brought together with the original thing, brings about a single true judgement about each separately and both together. (278c, Rowe translation 1997, 320, italics are the translator's)

Clearly, paradigms or models, *paradeigmata*, are standards of judgement. And, according to the *Statesman*'s description of how a model is used, the Forms are clearly paradigms or models. However, in the *Republic*, Socrates suggests that *paradeigmata* can be copied or imitated, but in the *Parmenides*, when Socrates suggests,

> "What appears most likely to me is this: these forms are like patterns [*paradeigmata*] set in nature, and other things resemble them and are likenesses; and this partaking of the forms is, for the other things, simply being modeled on them" (132c-d, Gill and Ryan translation 1997, 366-367),

Parmenides responds with the second version of the Third Man Argument:

> [PARMENIDES]: If something resembles the form, . . . can that form not be like what has been modeled on it, to the extent that the thing has been made like it? Or is there any way for something to be like what is not like it?
> [SOCRATES]: There is not.
> [PARMENIDES]: And isn't there a compelling necessity for that which is like to partake of the same one form as what is like it?
> [SOCRATES]: There is.
> [PARMENIDES]: But if like things are like by partaking of something, won't that be the form itself?
> [SOCRATES]: Undoubtedly.
> [PARMENIDES]: Therefore nothing can be like the form, nor can the form be like anything else. Otherwise, alongside the form another form will always make its appearance, and if that form is like anything, yet another; and if the form proves to be like what partakes of it, a fresh form will never cease emerging.
> [SOCRATES]: That's very true.
> [PARMENIDES]: So other things don't get a share of the forms by likeness; we must seek some other means by which they get a share.
> [SOCRATES]: So it seems. (Gill and Ryan translation 1997, 366-367)

In other words, in the *Republic*, it is suggested that *paradeigmata* may be copied. If the Forms are *paradeigmata* (models, patterns, or paradigms) that are copied by sensible objects, then sensible objects must be like the Forms. But, as Parmenides points out, if one says that sensible objects are like the Forms, the Third Man argument results. But, if

this is so, why does Plato repeatedly insist, using various expressions, that sensible objects are likeness, images, resemblances, or imitations of the Forms? Furthermore, as *paradeigmata* are standards for comparative judgement, as are the Forms, it must be that the Forms are *paradeigmata*, even though Parmenides insists that they are not. Consequently, it is the case that either the Third Man suggests that there are serious inconsistencies within Plato's Theory of Forms, or Parmenides' claim that there is no way "for something like to be like what is not like it" is false, and the Third Man poses no threat to the Theory of Forms. In the next chapter, I will maintain the latter, and will show how it is that Plato defeats the Third Man.

CHAPTER 3

The claim that Forms are patterns, models, or paradigms is apparently ruled out by what is stated about Forms and patterns in the *Parmenides*. At *Parmenides* 132d-133a, Socrates suggests that perhaps the Forms are patterns (*paradeigmata*) or paradigms that material objects copy (*einai homoiomata*) and resemble (*eokenai*). Parmenides though, suggests that patterns resemble their copies just as copies resemble their patterns. As patterns and copies resemble each other, then they both must possess the same quality that permits them to resemble each other. And, in the case of the Forms, this would require that there must be some Form over and above the Form itself that gives it the particular property that it possesses. This version of the Third Man Argument seems to rule out the possibility that the Forms are patterns. And, furthermore, it also asserts that the Resemblance Theory (which states that sensible objects resemble the Forms) is completely incorrect.

However, despite the challenge posed by the TMA, I think that the Resemblance Theory is not defeated by it. The Greek term "paradeigma" means "pattern" or "model." Patterns and models are related in that they are paradigms. They can serve as standards of comparison in that a dress cut from a certain pattern may be compared to the original pattern with respect to the form that it embodies; in the case of a dress, one can ask, "Does this dress correspond to that pattern?" However, the pattern to which the form of the dress is compared is not a piece of paper, but is instead the dressmaking *form* that is

sketched onto a certain piece of paper. It is this form that makes the dress the dress that it is. In other words, a pattern contributes a certain form to the objects that are said to be copies of it. Copies of a pattern are what they are because they embody a certain form, and they have this form by virtue of the fact that they embody, and so are copies, of a certain pattern. Simply put, copies of a pattern embody the pattern from which they are generated. Nevertheless, no copy is the same as its pattern, for all copies must be generated from an original, while a pattern need not be. Moreover, a copy is a thing that embodies a certain pattern, while a pattern is not so much a certain die itself, but is instead the *form* of the die. Similarly, although copies of a model resemble the original model in terms of their appearance, they do so by embodying whatever it is that identifies that model as being the particular sort of thing -- *what* -- it is. The same principle also applies in the cases of moulds and castings, reflections, or any instance of an original and an image. Moulds, for example, are paradigms, in that the form of a casting from a certain mould can be compared to the original mould with respect to the casting's likeness to the form of the mould. Furthermore, patterns, models, moulds, and the originals of images all function in the same way: they are all responsible for contributing to their copies a certain form that makes their copies the specific sorts of things that they are.

In the case of a mould and its copies, the copies all resemble each other due to the fact that they all share similar characteristics in virtue of the fact that they come from the same mould. However, a mould and one of its copies resemble each other due to the fact that the mould is the "backwards" original of the copy. What is raised on a casting is depressed in its mould, and, when the casting is popped out of the mould and laid side-by-side with its mould, what is depressed in the left-hand side of the mould will

appear raised on the left-hand side of the casting. The mould and the copy do not resemble each other with respect to anything else -- no other "third" mould, so to speak. In other words, then, the resemblance between form and casting is not the same as that between casting and casting, since castings or copies resemble each other in terms of direct similarity. This is *not* true, though, in the case of a form and its casting: a die *cannot* be identical to its casting, or else it would be incapable of being responsible for the creation of a casting, and so would not be a die; rather, in order for a die to serve as such, it must be like, but opposite to, its casting.

In the case of a mirror image (see *Republic* VI 509d-510a, VII 515e-516b) a resemblance relationship similar to that found between mould and casting is present between the original and its image. A mirror image and its original seem to resemble each other exactly, until one realizes that the mirror image is a right-left and "north-south" (if I am facing south when I stare into a mirror, my mirror image will appear to be facing north) reversal of the original object. In other words, my mirror image is just like me -- except reversed. Furthermore, while I can move anywhere of my own volition, the motions of my mirror image are confined to a small area and are completely dependent upon my motions. In other words, certain very significant properties of my mirror image are the *opposites* of mine, and must be so in order for my mirror image to exist. Moreover, in addition to being dependent upon being opposite to me in certain very significant ways, the existence of my mirror image is dependent upon *my* existence, whereas I do not seem to depend upon anything else for my existence.

In the case of most models, though, there is no reverse-resemblance relationship taking place. But, although models and their copies *may*, in some cases, appear to be

identical in all repects, they do not necessarily *have* to be identical to each other in all respects. For example, a model will not be identical to a painting or drawing that an artist makes of it, and an architect's model will not be identical to a real building. Nevertheless, both the artist's model and the painting of it share something in common, and the architect's model and its corresponding building share something in common. In both cases, the model is responsible for imparting to its representation a certain form or essence. The full-scale building is supposed to be just like its small-scale model -- both structures are supposed to be the very same sort of thing -- except that the actual building is much larger than the model. Nevertheless, the building and the model differ in that a model building is *not* a real building. Similarly, a person and his or her portrait are just like each other in that the person in the painting is the very same person that served as the model for the painting; yet, a painting of a a person is not a flesh-and-blood human being. Consequently, although models and their copies may embody a certain form, the original model and its copies may partake of two different sorts of existence, just like a mirror image and its original, or a mould and its castings, also partake of two different sorts of existence.

The discussion of copy-making in the *Sophist* (235b-236c) suggests a difference in types of resemblance that parallels that which exists between models and copies, between originals and images, and between forms and castings:

> VISITOR: We'll divide the craft of copy-making as quickly as we can . . .
> One type of imitation I see is the art of likeness-making. That's the one we have whenever someone produces an imitation by keeping to the proportions of length, breadth, and depth of his model, and also by keeping to the appropriate colors of its parts.
> THEAETETUS: But don't all imitators try to do that?
> VISITOR: Not the ones who sculpt or draw very large works. If they reproduced the true proportions of their beautiful subjects, you see, the upper parts

would appear smaller than they should, and the lower parts would appear larger, because we see the upper parts from farther away and the lower parts from closer.

THEAETETUS: Of course.

VISITOR: So don't those craftsmen say goodbye to the truth, and produce in their images the proportions that seem to be beautiful instead of the real ones?

THEAETETUS: Absolutely.

VISITOR: And as we said before, the part of imitation that deals with that should be called likeness-making.

THEAETETUS: Yes.

VISITOR: Now, what are we going to call something that appears to be a beautiful thing, but only because it's seen from a viewpoint that's not beautiful, and would seem unlike the thing it claims to be like if you came to be able to see such large things adequately? If it appears the way the thing does but in fact isn't like it, isn't it an appearance?

THEAETETUS: Of course.

VISITOR: And this part of imitation covers a great deal of painting and of the rest of imitation.

THEAETETUS: Of course

VISITOR: Wouldn't appearance-making be the right thing to call expertise in producing appearances that aren't likenesses?

THEAETETUS: Yes, definitely. (White translation 1997, 255-256)

In this section of the *Sophist*, Plato classifies copy-making into two kinds: appearance-making and likeness-making. Likeness-making has to do with the production of copies that are supposed to be identical in every respect to the original model. Appearance-making, however, is quite a different matter. Appearances *cannot* have exactly the same characteristics as their originals, for, if they did, they would not *resemble* their originals, they would be *identical* to them.

The making of castings most certainly falls under the category of appearance-making. Castings are not supposed to look like their original moulds, but, nevertheless, one can still see that the casting and its mould have the form of the same thing; the only difference between the two being that the casting is a "reversal" of the mould, and vice-versa. If a casting looked like its mould, it could not be a casting of some particular shape or form, but would instead be a copy of a certain mould for a certain type of casting. A casting could not be what it is if it looked like its mould. Similarly, if my

reflection in a mirror were like me in all aspects, then it would be an identical clone of me, and not merely my reflection.

Similarly, sensible objects are sensible appearances related to Forms. Sensible objects cannot have the same properties as Forms, for, if they did, they could not possibly be the things that they are. No sensible tree, sample of redness, or musical note can be eternal, ungenerated, indestructible, and so forth, for, if it were, it would not be the sensible thing that it is, and, for that matter, could not have any sensible existence at all and be recognized by the human sense-perception system. According to the Eleatic Visitor in the *Sophist*, a large statue and the human being it resembles share very different proportional properties, even though they seem to be identical. Likewise, a form and its casting have different properties of appearance (as well as physical properties), even though it is obvious that they share, or are of, the same form.

So, how is it that sensible objects and Forms resemble each other if they do not do so in the same way that two sensible objects do? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to first establish what a Form is. Fortunately, Plato himself does this in his dialogues: according to Plato, Forms are the essences of sensible objects. In the *Phaedo*, it is said that the Forms are "the reality of all other things, that which each of them essentially is" (65d-e, Grube translation 1997, 57). In the *Cratylus*, Socrates asks Hermogenes if he believes "that things have some fixed being or essence of their own" (386a, Reeve translation 1997, 103). Hermogenes admits that he is not sure; sometimes he tends to believe in Protagoras' doctrine "that things are to me as they appear to me, and are to you as they appear to you" (385e-386a, Reeve translation 1997, 103). To this, Socrates responds by wondering how it is that if Protagoras is correct, could Hermogenes,

or Protagoras himself, even, believe that there is any sort of a Truth at all (386a-d). Also, at the same time, points, out Socrates, Hermogenes rejects "Euthydemus' doctrine that everything always has every attribute simultaneously" (386d, Reeve translation 1997, 104). Concludes Socrates,

> But if neither is right, if it isn't the case that everything always has every attribute simultaneously or that each thing has a being or essence privately for each person, then it is clear that things have some fixed being or essence of their own. They are not in relation to us and are not made to fluctuate by how they appear to us. They are by themselves, in relation to their own being or essence, which is theirs by nature. (386d-e, Reeve translation 1997, 104).

Later in the *Cratylus*, Socrates asks again,

> Don't you think that just as each thing has a color or some of those other qualities we mentioned, it also has a being or essence? Indeed, don't color and sound each have a being or essence, just like every other thing that we say "is"? . . . So if someone were able to imitate in letters and syllables this being or essence that each thing has, wouldn't he express what each thing itself is? (423e, Reeve translation 1997, 140)

In other words, part of the aim of the dialogue in the *Cratylus* is to hammer home the point that each and every thing has a fixed being or essence of its own, an essence that can be nothing other than a Form.

Further evidence for the claim that Plato's Forms are essences come from *Republic* VI, where Forms are identified as "the beings" of sensible objects (507b, Grube/Reeve translation 1997, 1128). As well, in the *Parmenides*, Parmenides insists " 'that for each thing, there is some kind, a being itself by itself' " (135a, Gill and Ryan translation, 369). The next question that naturally arises after it has been established that Forms are the essences of sensible objects, is the question of what a sensible object is. Simply put, my thesis is this: that sensible objects, in Plato's view, are sensible manifestations of Forms.[24] There are two main advantages to this position regarding sensible objects, those being that

[24]My thanks to Prof. Martin Tweedale of the University of Alberta for suggesting this thesis to me after reading a number of my working drafts.

it successfully manages to do away with the TMA and the problem of participation. However, suggesting that Plato viewed sensible objects as appearances of Forms is to deviate considerably from standard interpretations of the Theory of Forms, and so will require some explanation on my part.

To say that sensible objects are appearances of Forms, is not, I emphasize, the same as saying that Forms can be perceived through the senses, or that sensible objects are Forms themselves. In this thesis, I use the term "sensible object" to refer to any bearer of characteristics that can be perceived through the senses. A sensible object may be either an object than can be counted (such as glasses of ice tea, puffs of smoke, campfires, houseplants, and human beings -- one can count one, two, or many of these things, depending on the circumstances), or a "mass object" (such as ice tea, air, cigarette smoke, or fire -- things that have definite quantity or volume, but cannot be counted as individuals), or a "sensible phenomenon" (such as the colour of the ice tea in a glass, the heat of a campfire, or the smell of the smoke from a burning cigarette). I consider sensible phenomena to be sensible objects, as it is possible to speak of characteristics possessed by a particular sensible phenomenon. For example, one can speak of the vibrancy, luciousness, glossiness, and uniformity of one particular patch of colour; likewise, one can characterize one particular scent as being burning, acrid, and repulsive.

Each and every sensible object can be classified as being some particular type of thing: a *lamp*, a *dog*, some *water*, a *vibrant* thing, an *acrid* thing. What Plato attempts to do with his Theory of Forms is to explain how it is that each sensible object becomes the sort of thing that it is. In other words, to recognize the Form in which an object participates is for one to know *what* the object is; recollection of the Forms is involved in

answering the question "*What is it?*" posed in reference to an object.[25] But how does an object become the particular sort of thing that it is? According to Plato, objects become what they are by participating in Forms. And Forms, for Plato, are the essences of sensible objects. If one knows what the essence of a sensible object is -- if one knows the Form of an object, then one will know what the object is.

In Plato's Theory of Forms, knowledge of Forms is arrived at by means of recollection: one perceives a sensible object, and it "reminds" one of a certain Form. However, if one remains content with mere recollection, one has not yet answered the question of "What is it?" Unfortunately, people's physical systems of sense-perception are not always accurate (*Lesser Hippias* 374d-e; *Phaedo* 65b, 83a; *Republic* VI 508c, VII 523e-524c, X 602c-d; *Theaetetus* 157e-158a). Furthermore, it is also the case that sometimes individuals are not very good at recollecting Forms correctly, either (*Theaetetus* 189c, 193c-194b). Consequently, in order for one to really know the answer to the question of "What is it?", one must use *reason* in order to identify a thing's true Form (*Theaetetus* 185a-e). Reason, for Plato, amounts to comparative judgement: is the perceived object in question really like the Form (of which one has innate knowledge), or is it not? (*Statesman* 283e: "the great and the small exist and are objects of judgement," Rowe translation 1997, 326; see also *Republic* VII 523a ff., X 602c-603a; *Philebus* 38b, 39a; *Theaetetus* 186a-d, 193c-194b, 198e-199b, suggested by 189e-190a) Depending on the situation, there are a number of ways one can verify whether or not a perceived object is truly like its supposed Form or not; measurement, for example, is a rational way to find

[25]Most of Plato's dialogues begin with a "What is *X*?" inquiry. As most of Plato's writings are centred around "What is *X*?" questions, it seems logical for him to have developed a theory about how these types of questions might be answered. Although the Theory of Forms is itself not a complete system detailing how knowledge is to be pursued, it certainly does play a crucial role in Plato's philosophy.

out whether or not a certain object participates in the Heavy, or the Large, or the Equal (*Protagoras* 356c-357b; *Republic* VII 524b, X 602c-d; *Statesman* 283d-e), and counting is a rational way to find out if a set of objects participates in the One, the Two, the Three, and so forth.[26] If one's rational faculties are in good working order, then one will be able to attain true knowledge of what a thing is. However, just as no one's physical sense-perception system works perfectly all the time, so too is it that no one's mental reasoning capacity is always working perfectly. Therefore, mistakes in Formal identification do happen on a regular basis, although more frequently with some individuals than others. Nevertheless, one important point to note about Formal recollection and reasoning is that in reasoning, Forms serve as standards of comparative judgement: sensible objects are compared to Forms and their likeness or dissimilarity to them is judged. Therefore, Forms are paradigms in that they are absolute standards of judgement.

In order for recollection to work, sensible objects *must* be the appearances, in space and time, of Forms, for it is by perceiving sensible objects that one comes to know their essences -- which are Forms. In other words, as perception is crucial for knowledge of Forms, which are the essences of the things with which one interacts on a day-to-day basis, there must be a *direct* link between sensible objects and Forms. Theories of participation that posit immanent characteristics within sensible objects fail to establish this

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[26]Counting, like all rational processes, involves comparative judgement . When counting, one "points" to each individual object in the set and assigns it a number in sequence. Once one has run out of objects to "point" to, one compares the last number assigned to one's original estimate of the number of objects in the set. Estimates can be quite vague; "lots" counts as a estimate for the number of objects in a set, even though it is hardly precise; counting allows one to arrive at a more accurate number (see *Theaetetus* 198b ff.). Arithmetic is a fast way of counting large numbers of things; therefore, it, too, is a rational process (see the passage on the arithmetic of philosphers as opposed to that of ordinary people at *Philebus* 56d-57a; see also *Statesman* 259e-260b).

necessary direct connection between object and Form. The closest way that sensible objects can be tied to Forms without actually being Forms themselves is by being sensible manifestations in space and time of Forms. It must be emphasized, though, that a sensible manifestation of a Form is *not* the same thing as a copy of a Form. Copies of Forms should be exactly the same as Forms in terms of all of their characteristics; in other words, a copy of the Form of Large must be large, insensible, eternal, ungenerated, indivisible, and so forth. However, no true copy can be ungenerated, and, if two Forms of the Large were to be generated at exactly the same time, neither could be considered to be the essence of Largeness, as there can only be one essence of any given thing (*Republic* X 597b-d). Furthermore, if sensible objects were identical to Forms in terms of all of their characteristics, they would not be sensible objects, but would instead be Forms. Therefore, sensible objects cannot be copies of Forms.

Critics of my position may wish to respond to my claims at this point by insisting that sensible objects *are* copies of the Forms -- very *bad* copies, in fact. For Plato, though, comparing insensible Forms to sensible objects amounts to comparing a painting of a carpenter with a carpenter (see *Republic* X 598c). Paintings of carpenters and real live carpenters have virtually nothing in common: no painting ever sawed a board in two, and no live carpenter is two-dimensional. The painting and the carpenter exist in two very separate "worlds": the painting is an image existing within an imaginary world, and the carpenter walks about on planet Earth; the painting cannot become a live carpenter, nor can the carpenter himself become an image. An image of a carpenter is not a carpenter, just as a photograph of myself is not really *me*. And yet, a picture of a carpenter is *like* a carpenter, and my photograph is *like* me. Why? Because a picture of a carpenter looks

like a carpenter and my photograph looks like me? No. Stick figures are readily used to represent people because they are *like* people, but no stick figure really looks like a person. And the blob little Mary drew at nursery school really is an image of Mommy, but it certainly does not look like her, either. So how does Mary's picture resemble her mother? The only way the blob and Mary's mother can be like each other is if they share the same *essence*. An essence is a certain way of being that makes an object *what* it is. An essence gives a thing a certain identity, so to speak. Both the picture of Mary's mother and Mary's mother partake of the very same way of being in that the picture of Mary's mother is really a picture *of* Mary's mother, and Mary's mother is really Mary's mother (and not Mary's mother's twin sister, or a cyborg that looks like Mary's mother, or doppelgänger, or anything else that might appear to be identical to Mary's mother). Mary's picture is a picture of her mother only if it *really* is a picture of her mother. If Mary drew the best representation that she could of a tree and is now lying and insisting that that is supposed to be her mother, then the blob is not a picture of Mary's mother. Similarly, a photograph is a photograph of me only if it is really a photograph *of* me, and not of my look-alike. In other words, an image and its original must be like in essence, but they need not *look* like each other. The implication that this has for the Theory of Forms is that the Form of the Cat need not sensibly resemble a cat: it need not purr, shed hairs on the furniture, or have four legs. Forms *need not* resemble sensible objects in terms of sensible characteristics; it is quite possible for two things to resemble each other *essentially*, but not in terms of their appearance. Consequently, it is quite possible for sensible objects to be sensible manifestations of Forms.

Over the years, several hundred photographs of me were printed in yearbooks at my high school. Each of these photos is really a photo of me. The photographs and I are alike in that we partake of the same essence, that of being Emily Jaklic. However, the photographs are not *me*, in that they are representations of me, and are not the flesh-and-blood Emily Jaklic.[27] Just because there are hundreds of photographs of me in hundreds of yearbooks does not mean that there are hundreds of copies of me in existence. And the reason for this is that the photographs of me to be found in high school yearbooks are *images* of me or *representations* of me; they are not *me*. Both my photos and I share in the same essence, but we partake of two very different sorts of existence, that of an image and that of a sensible object, respectively.[28]

The relationship of sensible object to Form is similar to that of image to sensible object. Sensible objects partake of a different sort of existence than do Forms, just as images partake of a different sort of existence than do sensible objects. Images exist as representations of sensible objects; sensible objects exist as the appearances of Forms. Consequently, it makes perfect sense for Plato to talk about sensible objects as being representations, imitations, reflections, or images of Forms, as the relationship between

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[27]A few students at my high school were not so lucky as I and had the wrong name identified with their photos. Nevertheless, Jane Doe's photograph is still a photograph *of* her, even though the yearbook insists that she is John Q. Public. It does not matter what label is attached to the photograph: a thing is still the particular thing that it is, even if it is misidentified. For Plato, calling something "chair" does not really make it a chair unless it *is* a chair -- that is, unless what the object really is corresponds with the essence that the name it is called is meant to represent. Both a real chair and the name "chair" share an essence (see the *Cratylus*, esp. 387b-c, 389d), and names are representations of sensible objects (*Cratylus* 430b, 439a). It is important to note that for Plato, the essence precedes the name. It is not the case that for Plato naming bestows a particular essence upon a given object. A Form is still the particular Form that it is, no matter what it is called; likewise, the essence of an object does not change, no matter what it is called; for Plato, a thing is always *what* it is, no matter what it is named (see *Cratylus* 430d-431b).

[28]I acknowledge that a photograph of me *qua* piece of photographic print paper does partake of the very same sort of existence that I do. Photographs in the sense of the rectangles of paper that can be put into albums are sensible objects. Photographs, as in the subject matter of negatives and photo album prints, are not sensible objects, but instead are images.

sensible object and Form is similar to that between image and original. Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that even though the relationship that exists between sensible objects and Forms is like the relationship that exists between images and originals, sensible objects are not representations of Forms, but instead are sensible *presentations* of Forms. Images, imitations, or representations are imagistic *re*-presentations of Forms. An image sensibly "presents" or manifests a Form, but not directly, as a sensible object does. A representation of a sensible object is a thing that is unlike the sensible object in question, but that still attempts to capture the essence (and often the sensible appearance) of the object in question, and so "present" the Form of the object (see *Republic* X 597c-598b, also VI 509d-511e, VII 514a-517c).

In the *Phaedo*, Socrates presents the example of a lover, who upon seeing a lyre, thinks of the boy to whom it belongs (73d). In this situation, the lyre recalls the boy to whom it belongs, not because it looks like the boy, but because both the lyre and the boy partake of the same essence; both the lyre and the boy are musical. Although the lyre and the boy both are both sensible objects, the lyre is able to symbolize or represent the boy because it partakes of the same essence that the boy does. Similarly, sensible objects recollect Forms in that they are, not representations, but "presentations" of Formal essences.

Within Plato's dialogues, there is certainly no shortage of references made to the changing nature of sensible objects. If sensible objects are appearances of Forms, then, one might assume, they ought to be stable and fixed in their appearance just as Forms are; yet, they are not: for example, the colour of a car will change if it passes under a street lamp, and it will appear larger or smaller and its horn louder or softer depending on how

far away it is from the perceiver. Can positing sensible objects as appearances of Forms account for the constant change that is a part of sensible existence? Certainly. In the case of my photograph, my image remains fixed in the same position, in the same situation, for as long as it exists as a visible print upon a piece of paper. Unlike me, my image will never grow older or move to a different city. I change; my image does not (although it may disappear if the photograph *qua* piece of paper is destroyed or the photographic pigments decay). The fact that most images and representations do not change, while their originals do, is quite well accepted.[29] As the relationship between Form and sensible object is similar to that between original and image, I do not really see why there should be a problem in accepting that sensible objects, as appearances of Forms, are subject to change while Forms are not.

In order for a sensible thing to be capable of being perceived, it must have sensible characteristics. A thing that cannot be heard, felt, smelled, seen, or tasted is not a sensible thing. According to Plato, there exists a Form of the Bed, the essence of all sensible beds. Sensible beds are perceivable manifestations of the Form of the Bed. However, in order for the essence of a bed to be manifested, it must appear with sensible qualities. In other words, the essence of a bed cannot manifest itself to the perceiver by itself; instead, its manifestation must be "joined up" with a number of manifestations of Forms of sensible qualities. Similarly, the Form of a sensible quality such as Softness cannot manifest itself unless its appearance in space and time is "joined up" with the manifestation of the Form

[29]Reflections might be thought to be something of an exception to this rule, although really, they too, do not change. A mirror image is not *really* moving or changing -- its original is. For example, if I stand in front of a mirror and wave my hand, it is not the case that my mirror image is really waving at me; rather, I am waving at the mirror, and it is reflecting my image and my image mirrors my action. The mirror image merely reflects the change that is present in the original; it does not really change itself. In order for a mirror image to really be said to change, it would have to do so on its own, independently of its original.

of a countable or a mass object. Consequently, a manifestation of any given Form must be related to manifestations of other Forms (see *Phaedo* 104a-b and the relation that exists between the number three and oddness). For example, in the case of the boy and the lyre at *Phaedo* 73d, both the boy and the lyre partake of the essence that is Musicality. Musicality, though, cannot manifest itself on its own, but only in conjunction with some other thing that will consequently be made to be musical. Therefore, the essence of Musicality manifests itself in conjuction with the essence of the Lyre and the Boy, and so it is said that both the lyre and the boy in the *Phaedo* partake of the Form of Musicality.

However, the sensible appearances of Forms in space and time tend to have a certain regularity to them; some Forms just always seem to manifest themselves along with certain others. For example, no sensible thing can have a shape without also having a limit; no object can be coloured without also being a certain colour; no human being is also a plant; and no cat is also a dog. Therefore, as the manifestations of certain Forms are *always* related to each other, so too must their Forms be related to each other. Yet, there must also be certain Forms that are never related to each other because they never manifest themselves together (see *Phaedo* 105a-b). Often, though, a certain Form will frequently, *but not always* manifest itself with certain other Forms. For example, while most cats have claws, Fluffy, the neighbour's pet, does not. While manifestations of the Form of the Cat usually appear along with manifestations of the Form of the Claw, they do not necessarily have to, although they do appear together often enough to make many people insist that all cats have claws. While the Form of the Cat is related to the Form of the Claw, their sensible manifestations do not necessarily have to be. And, if sensible manifestations of two different Forms can be related at some times, but not at others, then

it is possible for Formal manifestations to sensibly appear in relation to each other, terminate their relations, and then appear in conjunction with manifestations of different Forms. Furthermore, the interactions manifestations of Forms have amongst themselves as they move through space and time affect which Forms are manifested and which are not (see *Phaedo* 102b ff.). Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that change among sensible objects refers to changes that take place with regard to what Forms are made to sensibly appear in space in time. When changes occur among sensible objects, it is not the case that Forms are acting upon each other. There are relations among Forms; however, these relations are not the same as those that exist between sensible objects (*Parmenides* 133c-134a). A Form has no relationships with the sensible manifestations of other Forms; nor do sensible appearances act upon Forms. Forms only have relationships among themselves (and to their own proper manifestations); in other words, while certain Forms may be sensibly manifested in association with others (such as, for example, the Form of Man with the Form of Tallness), the Form of Man has no relationship to any sensible manifestation of Tallness. If the Form of Man manifests itself in a certain location in space and time, it will be associated with a certain manifestation of Tallness (*Phaedo* 102b-103a); however, this is only due to the fact that the Form of Man is related to the Form of Tallness. The Form of Man does not cause a manifestation of of Tallness; instead, the Form of Man is causally responsible for the existence of the sensible objects known as men. Rather, the Form of Tallness is causally responsible for all sensible manifestations of tallness, and the only reason why tallness happens to appear along with men, has to do with the fact that Tallness and Man are related Forms.[30]

[30]Note though, that changes in the appearances of sensible objects can also be caused by the changes that occur in human sense-perception systems (like eyesight that begins to fail with age, for example).

By positing Forms as essences and sensible objects as their appearances in space and time, Plato can overcome the TMA. Resemblance between a Form and a sensible object occurs due to the fact that a Form gives a sensible object a certain essence, an essence which is, in fact, the Form itself. Whereas two sensible objects resemble each other because they both manifest a certain Form, a Form and a sensible object resemble each other because the Form is what is manifested by the object itself. Consequently, a Form and its sensible manifestation need not resemble each other with respect to any other Form.

Furthermore, if sensible objects are posited as being the appearances of Forms in space and time, the question of the immanence or transcendence of Forms ceases to be of particularly great concern. Simply put, Forms are both immanent and transcendent. Forms are immanent within sensible objects due to the fact that Forms are the essences of sensible objects. And yet, Forms remain transcendent from sensible objects in that Forms partake of an entirely different realm of existence than do sensible objects. Forms belong to the realm of essences -- eternal, ungenerated, imperishable, indivisible, non-composite, uniform, insensible entities -- whereas sensible objects belong the realm of things that are sensible, generated, perishable, and composite (in the sense that in order for sensible objects to be perceived, certain manifestations must occur together). Forms can exist even without their sensible manifestations, just as I will still exist even if every representation of me (be it a photograph, artwork, memory, or written description) is destroyed right at this moment. Just as my essence has been captured by every true representation of me (that is,

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Human sense organs are themselves sensible objects, and so are subject to change.

a representation that really is *of* me, and not of someone or something else), so too, is each and every sensible object a manifestation of a certain Form.

In the case of little Mary's drawing of her mother, Mary's drawing is a *true* representation of her mother in that it really is of her mother, and so is a representation of her mother in essence (see *Cratylus* 430d-431a). Yet even though Mary's drawing is a true representation of her mother, that is not to say that it is a *good* representation of her mother. Mary's drawing does not look the least bit like her mother, and so is an abysmally poor likeness of her mother. In order for Mary's picture to be a *good* representation of her mother, it would have to look like her mother. The more the picture looks like a flesh-and-blood human being -- the more "alive" it is, the more physical details it includes -- the better a representation it is of her mother (see *Cratylus* 431c-d) .[31]

Similarly, according to Plato, sensible objects are true, but rather poor "re-*presentations*" of Forms. Obviously, a sensible object cannot be insensible as a Form is. However, not only are sensible objects not insensible, but they also are not eternal, indivisible, imperishable, or ungenerated. Consequently, the resemblance that exists between a sensible object and its Form is a true, but poor one. Sensible objects "strive to

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[31]Note that a seemingly good representation of something can still be false. A really good Elvis impersonator, no matter how much he happens to look and sound like the famous singer, still presents a false representation of Elvis Presley if the impersonator's real goal is to impersonate Frank Sinatra and not Elvis Presley. The impersonation in question is actually a true but exceedingly bad impersonation of Frank Sinatra, even though every single audience member believes that what he or she is being entertained by is a good impersonation of Elvis Presley. Similarly, in *Republic* II (360e-361d), Plato presents the reader with the case of two men, one perfectly just, and the other perfectly unjust. The unjust man, though, is extremely good at concealing his outrageous behaviour, and so is believed by everyone to be just. By contrast, due to unfortunate circumstances, the just man is thought to be truly unjust by the members of his community. In short, the unjust man presents a very good, but false representation of a just man (whereas the truly just man is not really trying to represent anyone, but is still mistaken for an unjust man).

On the other hand though, a seemingly bad representation of something can still be true -- see *Cratylus* 431e-433a and the discussion of names as representations or images of sensible objects.

be like" their respective Forms, but can never really even come close to fully resembling Forms (*Phaedo* 75a, Grube translation 1997, 65). Nevertheless, the longer that a sensible object is capable of remaining in existence, and the purer that it is (that is, the less that is manifested along with other Forms) the better it is at being a resemblance of a Form.

CHAPTER 4

In Chapter 3, the thesis that I attempted to defend was precisely this: that if sensible objects are considered to be the appearances (in space and time) of Formal essences, then solutions can be found to a number of so-called problems associated with the Theory of Forms. First of all, the Third Man Argument ceases to pose a threat to the consistency of the theory; secondly, the language used in Plato's discussion of the Theory of Forms -- that of *both* immance and transcendence, as well as the language of resemblance -- ceases to be so perplexing, and, thirdly, the relationship that exists between sensible objects and Forms ceases to be a mystery.

Nevertheless, the thesis that I have here presented in these pages can be nothing more than a thesis; it cannot be conclusively proven that Plato really believed that sensible objects are the appearances of Forms. However, that being said, I think that it can be conclusively proven (based upon evidence from Plato's dialogues) that Forms are both paradigms as well as the essences of sensible objects. For Plato, a paradigm (*paradeigma*) is not merely a pattern, model, or form, but is, in fact, what is copied by a pattern, or by the copies of a model. For Plato, a *paradeigma* is a certain form or essence that is copied, resembled, or imitated. Yet, at the same time, Plato's *paradeigma* also serves as an absolute standard: either a thing will conform to a certain *paradeigma*, or it will not; either a thing will truly imitate a certain model, or it will not.

Nevertheless, sensible objects that partake of a certain essence may do so in a way that is either more or less stable and invariable; the more stable and invariable a sensible object is, the more it is behaving like a Formal essence, and the less it is behaving like a sensible object. In other words, as far as the sensible appearances of Forms are concerned, stability and invariability are better than change. As essences, of course, Forms are completely stable and invariable, and thus partake of a way of being that is better than that of which their sensible appearances must partake. Since Forms are eternal, invariable, incomposite, ungenerated and so forth, they partake of a sort of existence that is different from that of their sensible appearances, and that is, for Plato, a much better way of being than that had by their sensible appearances, as it is unchanging, never-ending, and completely consistent.

One criticism that may be levelled at the account of the Theory of Forms that I have given in this thesis is that construing sensible objects as the appearances of Forms fails to explain why the sensible manifestations of Forms have a tendency to "join up" together and also can act upon each other. Plato, it seems, has a very vague notion of what exactly a sensible object consists; hence, the definition of a sensible object that I have had to employ in this thesis is a very broad one. And, moreover, the fact that the sensible manifestations of Forms change and can effect change upon each other is simply taken for granted by Plato; he does not seem to have any coherent theory as to why the sensible appearances of Forms should always be changing.[32] Clearly, the claim that sensible objects are manifestations of Forms cannot account for every weakness that exists within the Theory of Forms.

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[32]I admit that *Timaeus* might be claimed to give some sort of an explanation for the reason why change exists in the universe, but whether or not the *Timaeus* should be taken literally is questionable.

Nor, I believe, should it have to. If Plato's Theory of Forms were perfectly flawless, then there would be no such thing as Aristotelianism. What I have attempted to do in this thesis is to demonstrate that perhaps Plato's Theory of Forms is not as incoherent and inconsistent as many people might believe. I am not arguing that the Theory of Forms is without weaknesses and is immune to criticism, and so cannot be improved upon. For, if the Theory of Forms were a perfect account of the ontology of the universe, then every student of philosophy today would be a devoted Platonist, and so I would never have written this thesis in the first place.

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